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Lives of the Vaishnava Saints

translated from original Bengali source materials by

Bhakti Vidhan Mahayogi Swami



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Lives of the Saints
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
BY THE TRANSLATOR

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Bibliography
and select reading list

This book, "Lives of the Saints," is a translation of a book published by Gaudiya Mission of Calcutta entitled, *Srī Gaura-parṣāda-caritāvalī*, compiled from a number of sources by Hari-kṛpa dāsa. The list that follows enumerates all the literatures used in the compilation of this book, as well as other books and source materials that were useful to me as reference books in making this translation. The list is by no means exhaustive, but it is representative.

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Śrī Gaurāṅga Campu, Raghunātha Goswāmī.

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Lives of the Saints: Chapter One

Shri Abhirama Gopal Thakura

Shri Abhirama Gopal Thakura was also known as Shri Rama Das. He was a great devotee of Lord Nityananda. On the order of Shri Nityananda Prabhu, he became a great acharya and preacher of Gaudiya Vaishnavism.He was a very influential personality, and atheists and blasphemers were very much afraid of him. Empowered by Shri Nityananda Prabhu, he was always in ecstasy and was kind to all fallen souls. It is siad that if he offered obeisances to any stone other than a *shalagram-shila*, it would immediately burst into pieces. According to *Gaura-Ganodesha-Dipika* (12) in Krishna-lila he was Shridama, one of the 12 prominent boy cowherd friends of Shri Krishna. He was Nityananda's dearmost devotee. Abhiram Gopal's wife's name was Shri Malini devi.

Abhirama Gopala Thakura lived in Khanakula Krishnanagara. Khanakula Krishanagar may be visited by taking the narrow gauge train from Howrah Station in Calcutta to Amta. It is located in the present Hooghly District of West Bengal. There, in Khanakula Krishnanagara, near the bankof the Khana river, is the temple of Abhirama Thakura. Because it is a town (nagara) with a Krishna temple, the town is called Krishna-nagara, and because the temple is on the *kula* (banks) of the Khana, it is called Khanakula-krishna nagara Just outside the temple is a bakula tree. This place is known as Siddha-bakula-kunja. It is said that Abhirama Thakura used to like sitting beneath this tree.

The story of how the Gopinath deity of Khanakula Krishnanagara was established is as follows. One day, the deity of Gopinatha appeared to Abhiram Gopal in a dream, and informed him that he wanted to manifest himself in Khanakula Krishnanagara. It is said that he was buried in the earth, and that in the dream he ordered Abhirama Gopal to excavate him and inaugurate his worship. Abhirama Gopal went to the place where the Lord had indicated he would be found, and began excavation. There, after digging for some time, he found the mind-enchanting deity of Shri Gopinatha. The place where this discovery was made is now called Rama kunda, and there is a small lake there. The Bhakti Ratnakara says, "After having excavated the Gopinatha deity, all the devotees headed by Rama Dasa (Abhirama Gopala) bathed in the sacred waters of the kunda near the spot where the deity had been found. From that day on the kunda became famous as Rama Kunda. Whoever bathes there becomes free from repeated birth and death."

One day Shri Abhirama Gopala was overwhelmed with the ecstasy of sakhya rasa, and had a desire to play the flute of a cowherd boy. Intoxicated by the bliss of Krishna-prema, he began searching the four directions for a suitable flute. As he

searched through the forest for a suitable instrument all at once he saw before him a big log. The log was so huge that sixteen men could not move it. Grabbing hold of that log, he turned it into a flute and began to play upon it. The Chaitanya Charitamrita says, "Rama dasa was one of the principle branches of the Nityananda branch of the Chaitanya tree of bhakti. He was full of sakhya-prema—love of Krishna saturated with the mellow of friendship. He once picked up a log that sixteen men couldn't lift and used it as a flute."

Shri Abhirama Thakura had a bullwhip that was imbued with divine power. Its name was "Jayamangal." Whoever was struck with this whip became filled with Krishna prema. One day Shrinivasa Acharya went to take darshan of Abhiram Gopala. At that time, Abhiram Gopal touched him three times with Jayamangal. The Thakur's good wife, Malini, cried out, "My Lord! Do not touch him again. Calm yourself. Shrinivas is only a boy. If you touch him again he will lose consciousness." As a result of coming in contact with the whip of Abhirama Thakura, Shrinivasa Acharya became filled with Shri Krishna prema.

When Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ordered Nityananda Prabhu to preach in Bengal, he sent Abhirama Gopal and Gadadhara Das along with him. Simply upon seeing Abhiram Gopal, atheists and blasphemers would flee in terror. He was a remarkable scholar, well-versed in all the scriptures. He married his wife, Malini, upon the order of Shri Nityananda Prabhu. His disappearance day is on the seventh day of the dark moon in the month of Chaitra, and on that day a great festival attended by thousands of devotees is held every year in Khanakula-Krishnanagara.

Lives of the Saints: Chapter Two

Shri Baladeva Vidyabhusana

Shrimad Baladev Vidyabhusan Prabhu was a pure devotee of the highest order, who cared for nothing but the service of the Lord. He didn't have a spot of desire for name and fame. He was the composer of many scriptures which are as priceless as precious gems, for the ultimate benefit of all those who have taken human birth. The exact location of his birth, the names of his mother and father, and their family tree is not known. The exact circumstances of his birth and childhood are, therefore, unknown. Still, some are of the opinion that he took birth in a place called Baleshvara, a village neighboring Remuna, in the early part of the 18th century A.D, as the son of a vaisya, an agriculturist. At an early age he became learned in Sanskirt grammar, poetry, rhetoric, and logic. After becoming expert in all these subjects, he began wandering to different places of pilgrimage. After wandering about in this way for some time, and after visiting many holy places, he happened to stay at a temple of the Tattvavadi followers of Shri Madhvacharya. There, he became fluent in his understanding of the *tattvavada-siddhanta*, that is, the philosophical and theological conclusions of the followers of Madhva. After this, he took sannyasa, and preached the *tattvavada-siddhanta* very vigourously throughout the length and breadth of India.

As he wandered from one place to the next, he gradually came to Jagannatha Puri. . There he remained and preached for a few days. At that time, he chanced to meet one of the foremost disciples of Shri Rasikananda Deva, Pandit Shri Radha-Damodara, with whom he discussed devotional principles. At that time, Shrimad Radha-Damodara dev Goswami instructed Baladev on the subject of Shri Gourasundara's pastimes of mercy and His teachings on Gaudiya Vaishanva *siddhanta* to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. After hearing the divine wisdom spoken by Shri Radha-Damodara Goswami, Baladeva's heart was deeply moved. After a few days of hearing from him, he accepted initiation into the Radha-Krishna mantra, and began studying the Sat-Sandarbhas of Jiva Goswami at the holy feet of his gurudeva, Radha-Damodara Goswami.

After a short time, Baladeva became expert in the Gaudiya Vaishanva siddhanta. After staying with Radha-Damodara Goswami for some time, he was ordered to further his studies in Gaudiya Vaishnavism by going to Vrindavan and

taking shelter at the holy feet of Vishvanatha Cakravarti Thakura. After first visiting Nabadwipa, he soon arrived in Vrindavan.

Shri Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakur (Shri Harivallabha dasa), was very happy to see Baladeva's submission, modesty, learning, and renunciation. From that day forward, for some time, he kept Baladeva by his side and taught him the acintya-bheda-abheda philosophy of Shri Chaitanya and many other important siddhantas related to the Gaudiya Vaishnava conception of Krishna-bhakti. From this point on, Shri Baladeva's life and soul was fully dedicated to the theistic conception of the Gaudiya Sampradaya. His mind was fixed on this, and with one-pointed determination, he now began preaching this line to the exclusion of all others.

One day, in Jaipur, in the royal court, the Ramanuja sampradaya began arguing a case in connection with the Gaudiya sampradaya. They informed the king that the Gaudiya sampradaya had no commentary on the most important revealed scripture of Vedic religion—Vedanta; therefore they had no siddhanta and no real sampradaya, or school. As a consequence they should give up their service of the deities of Govinda and Gopinatha, and entrust them with those who were bona fide members of a genuine sampradaya. At that time, the king of Jaipura was a follower of the Gaudiya sampradaya. He immediately sent word of the controversy by messenger to Vishvanatha Cakravarti Thakur in Vrindavan, wanting to know if the Gaudiya sampradaya actually did have any commentary on theVedanta. If there was, the king wanted that the commentary be sent immediately to Jaipur to satisfy the scrutiny of the pandits from the Ramanuja Sampradaya.

At this time, Shri Vishvanatha Chakravarti was very old and infirm. It was impossible for him to make the arduous journey to Jaipur. He sent his student and disciple, Shri Baladev, in his place. Baladeva Vidyabhusan was an expert scholar in all the important scriptures. In the midst of a huge assembly of pandits from the Ramanuja sampradaya, Baladeva challenged them all to argue with him in scholarly debate. A long, and hard-fought debate took place, with tumultuous arguing from the Ramanuja school. Still, none of them could stand before his conclusive statements, keen scholarship, and penetrating intellect. Baladeva argued that the founder of the Gaudiya Sampradaya, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu established the Shrimad-Bhagavatam as the topmost commentary on Vedanta. The Bhagavatam itself claims that it is *bhashyanam brahma-sutranam*, the natural commentary on Vedanta. This is confirmed on the basis of evidence given by Jiva Goswami in his Sat Sandarbha. Therefore, the Gaudiya sampradaya has chosen to

accept Shrimad-Bhagavatam as the original commentary on Vedanta, and sees no need for a separate commentary.

At that point, the pandits from the Ramanuja *sampradaya* shouted: "He admits that there is no commentary! They have no commentary!" Having no other recourse, Shri Baladeva Vidyabhusan promised to show them the Gaudiya commentary on Vedanta within a few days. The pandits were astonished to think that such a thing existed. They were suspicious that this might be some kind of trick, but were silenced for the time being.

Very troubled within his mind, Shri Baladeva Vidyabhusana went to the temple of Shri Govinda, the deity of Rupa Goswami. After offering his eightfold obeisances before the deity, he related everything that had taken place. That night in a dream, Shri Govinda told him, you must compose the commentary. That commentary will be personally sanctioned by me. No one will be able to find any fault in it. Seeing this in his dream, Baladeva became very happy, and his heart was full of strength, ready for the task at hand. After this, he meditated on the lotus feet of Govinda and began writing his commentary. Within a few days it was completed. This commentary became known as the *Govinda Bhashya* commentary on Vedanta.

an addendum appended to the *Govinda Bhashya*, after it was published, Shri Baladeva has written, *vidyarupam bhushanam ye pradaya, khatim nitye teno yo mamudarah, Shri govinda-svapna-nirdishtha bhashye, radhabandhurangah sa jiyat.* "May Shri Govinda be all glorious. By his mercy, he revealed this commentary to me in a dream. The commentary revealed by him is especially appreciated by the highly learned, and as a result of this I have been given the name Vidyabhushan, but it is Shri Govinda who deserves all credit. May that Shri Govinda who is the most dear life and soul of Shri Radhika, be all-victorious."

With the Govinda Bhashya commentary in hand, Baladeva Vidyabhushan arrived at the assembly hall of the king, where the pandits were waiting for him. When he showed them his commentary, they were speechless. The Gaudiya sampradaya was proclaimed victorious. The king and all the Gaudiya Vaishnavas were supremely happy. At that time the pandits gave Shri Baladeva the name "Vidyabhushana," or one whose ornament is knowledge, in honor of his great scholarship. The year was 1628, Shaka era. From the day forward, the king of Jaipur decreed, everyone would attend the aroti of Shri Govinda, the deity beloved by the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, who was ultimately responsible for such a wonderful commentary on Vedanta.

The Ramanuja pandits, falling under the influence of Shri Baladeva Vidyabhusana, accepted him as their acharya and wanted to become his disciples. With great humility, Baladeva Vidyabhushana refused, explaining that there are four sampradayas, among which the Shri Sampradaya is a genuine school that preaches servitude to God as the best religious process. By advancing the views of the Gaudiya sampradaya, he meant no disrespect to the Shri sampradaya. To insult the Shri sampradaya would be a great offense, he said.

Shripad Baladeva Vidyabhushan returned from Jaipur to Vrindavan carrying the message of his victory. Upon returning, he submitted to the lotus feet of Shri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura and told him the news. All the visiting Vaishnavas and the residents of Vrindavan were delighted, and Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura bestowed his blessings upon Baladeva Vidyabhusana.

After this, Baladeva Vidyabhusana began writing a commentary on the Sat Sandarbha. Soon Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura passed away, and the Vaishnava community felt as if a great beacon of divine light had been extinguished. At that time, Shri Baladeva Vidyabhusan became regarded among the Vaishnava community as the keeper of the flame, the leader among those who understood the teachings of Shri Chaitanya.

In his teachings, Baladeva establishes the transcendental position of the Vedas, and then argues that they are the best evidence for knowing the supreme truth. In his *Siddhanta-darpana*, Baladeva has explained the position of transcendental sound in relationship to Krishna and his holy name as follows:

ekameva pram tattvam vachyavachaka bhavabhak
vachyah sarveshvaro devo vachakah pranavobhavet
matsya-kurma-adibhir-rupair-yatha vachyo bahur-bhavet
vachako'pi tatharthadi-bhavadbahur-udiryate
adyantarahitatvena svayam nityam prakirtite
avirbhava tirobhavau syatamasya yugeyuge

"The one absolute truth has two categories: the named (Krishna) and the name (Om). Parameshvara, Shri Krishna, the absolute person is the named; *pranava*, or *omkara* (Om) is the name. The named, or Parameshvara Shri Krishna, reveals himself in different forms as Matsya, Kurma, and many other forms. In the same way the name of the Supreme Lord expands into many different forms; such as the transcendental syllable Om, the gayatri mantram, *and the Vedas themselves.* There is no limit to the Supreme Personality of Godhead; he has no beginning and no end. As a consequence, his glorification is also eternal. He appears within this

material world, stays for some time, and again disappears according to his own sweet will."

Baladev explains the potency of Godhead in his *Siddhanta-darpana:* "The Lord has three potencies—thinking (*jnana*) feeling (*kriya*) and willing (*bala*). Through these three potencies he causes the material creation to come into being. The rays of consciousness emanating from him—the *jiva* souls—are his separated parts and parcels. By his thinking, feeling, and willing, they too come into being. The *Vedas* are spoken by the Lord, who is all-perfect. The *Vedas* are therefore free from the four defects of material existence: error, cheating, illusion, and imperfect perception. And so, the *Vedas* are the perfect form of evidence for understanding the Supreme Truth. The Vedas glorify Krishna as the absolute truth. The *Puranas* and *Itihasas* are as good as the Vedas. They too glorify Krishna as the absolute truth."

In his *Vedanta-samantaka*, Baladev has expanded on this thesis of the Vedas being the best evidence for understanding the Supreme Godhead. There he says: *tadevam sarvatah shreishtha shabdasya sthite tattvanirnayakastu shrotilakshana eva na tvarshalakshanopi.* "There are different ways of knowing what is truth: *pratyaskha*, direct perception, *anuman*, inference, hypothesis, and deduction, *shabda*, the words of the authorities *arthapati*, interpretation, *anupalabdhi*, negative inference, *sambhava*, the laws of probability, and *aitihya*, history. Of all these methods of arriving at truth, *shabda*, hearing from authorities, is best. The best source of knowledge about the absolute is the *shruti*: revealed truth received from Vedic authority. Different scholars always entertain different opinions about reality, but the Vedic shastras are eternal and transcendental, moreover they are free from the four defects of material existence, having sprung directly from the Supreme Lord Himself. therefore they are the best evidence for knowing the absolute truth. " (*Vedanta Samantaka* 1/51)

What has been proved on the basis of solid evidence, *pramana*, is called *prameya*. Baladev has written a book called *Prameya Ratnavali*, in which he states nine principles that he has established are facts, proven by the incontrovertible evidence of the Vedas. The teachings of Madhva-Gaudiya Vaishnavism as it has descended from Madhvacharya to Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu have been summarised in the Prameya Ratnavali. His nine principles are stated in the following verse (PR 8):

shri madvhah praha vishnum paratamam akhilamnaya vedyam ca cisvam
satyam bhedam ca jivam hari carana jusas tartamyam ca tesham
moksham vishnu-anghri-labham tad-amala-bhajanam tasya hetum pramanam

pratyaksadi trayam cety upadisati hari krsna-caitanya chandra
"Shri Madhvacaharya taught that:
1) Krishna, who is known as Hari is the Supreme Lord, the Absolute.
2) That Supreme Lord may be known through the Vedas.
3) The material world is real.
4) The jivas, or souls, are different from the Supreme Lord.
5) The jivas are by nature servants of the Supreme Lord.
6) There are two categories of jivas: liberated and illusioned.
7) Liberation means attaining the lotus feet of Krishna, that is, entering into an eternal relationship of service to the Supreme Lord.
8) Pure devotional service is the cause of this relationship.
9) The truth may be known through direct perception, inference, and Vedic authority. These very principles were taught by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

According to Baladeva there are five categories of *tattvas* or truths which constitute reality: *ishvara*, God; *jiva*, soul; *prakriti*, matter; *kala*, time; and *karma*, action. *Ishvara*, or God, is the greatest. He is all-knowing, he is the utmost realization of transcendental bliss, and his very nature is ecstasy. He is full in all qualities and is the absolute person. He is the master of everything, and is eternally free from birth and death. He is the master of all the gods headed by Brahma and Shiva. He is the supreme husband, the Lord of lords, and the Supreme Person, the worthiest of receiving prayers. He alone remains as the absolute truth even after this material world (which is his separated material energy) is destroyed along with all the demigods such as Brahma, Shiva, and Indra.

Baladeva further explains that Krishna has three energies, *parashakti*, *kshetrajna-shakti*, and *maya-shakti*. Parashakti means svarupa-shakti, or the Lord's internal potency. *Kshetrajna-shakti* means *jiva-shakti*, or the living beings, and *maya-shakti* means the Lord's external potency, his potency for keeping the souls in illusion. This explanation is on the basis of the *Vishnu Purana*. He goes on to explain that there is no difference between the body and soul of God. They are one and the same. As Krishna, the Supreme Lord has two hands, he plays a flute, he has a transcendental form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss, and he is known by the names Govinda and Gopal. Lakshmidevi is nondifferent from him, in that he is the Supreme Energetic and She is His Supreme Energy. (*sei jaganmata lakshmi vishnur anapayini shakti*) This is confirmed throughout the *shastra*. Whatever form the lord appears in, there is a corresponding Lakshmi form who acts as his eternal consort. When the Lord appears as a god, Lakshmi appears as a goddess. When the Lord

advents as an ordinary human being, Lakshmi also descends upon this earth as an ordinary human being. Baladeva Vidyabhushan says: *teshu sarveshu lakshmi-rupeshu radhayah svayam laksmitvam mantavyam sarveshu bhagavad-rupeshu krishnasya svayam bhagavatvavat:* (*Vedanta-samantaka* 2.37) Of all the manifestations of Lakshmidevi, Shrimati Radharani is the Supreme Goddess, just as amongst so many avatars of Godhead, Krishna is the supreme Personality of Godhead. This is confirmed in the *Brihad-Gautamiya Tantra*, which states, "Shri Radhika is the Supreme Goddess. Her very nature is Krishna, for her very existence is permeated by Krishna. Therefore she is known as Krishnamayi, or one who is full of Krishna. She is known as Paradevata, for she is the Supreme Goddess. All other goddesses are subordinate to her. She is the Supreme Lakshmi and her transcendental effulgence surpasses all conceptions of brilliance. She is the supreme enchantress, for she enchants Krishna Himself, who is capable of charming million. of cupids."

Baladev cites Shaunaka Muni who says in Shrimad-Bhagavatam that of all the avatars, expansions of Godhead, and Personalities of Godhead, Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The worship of Krishna, must therefore be regarded as the highest form of worship.

According to Baladeva, the jiva souls are the atomic spiritual energy of the Lord. The souls are eternal and can never be destroyed by any means. The soul's true eternal nature is to be filled with transcendental knowledge: *sa ca jivo bhagavadaso mantavyah dasabhuto harereva nanyasyaive kadacaneti padmat* (*Vedanta-samantaka 3.11*) "It is the constitutional nature of the soul to be a servant of Bhagavan Shri Krishna. It is the version of the Padma-Purana that the soul is an eternal servant of Hari, and has no other genuine position." By surrender to the lotus feet of a spiritual master who is a devotee of Krishna,one attain Krishna-bhakti by the guru's mercy. Upon attaining Krishna-bhakti one gets Krishna Himself.

In His Vedanta-samantaka, Shri Baladeva Vidyabhusana offers the following prayer to the lotus feet of his *gurudeva*, Shri Radha-Damodara Goswami:

radhadidamodara nama vibhrata,
viprena vedantamayah syamantaka
shri radhikayairvinivedicomaya
tasyah pramodam sa tanotu sarvada

Having been deputed to do so by my gurudeva, the brahmana named Shri Radha-Damodara Goswami, I have compiled this commentary on the Vedanta known as Vedanta-syamantaka for the sake of Shrimati Radharani's pleasure. This

commentary is a summary of the important points of Vedanta. May it be pleasing to Shri Radhika.

Shri Baladeva Vidyabhusana had two superexcellent disciples who were perfected souls. Their names were Shri Uddhava Dasa and Shri Nandana Mishra. Among the books compiled by Shri Baladeva Vidyabhusana were as follows:

His commentary on *Vedanta* called the *Govinda-bhashya*; the "jewel of conclusions" or *Siddhanta Ratna*; *Sahitya Kaumudi*; a summary of *Vedanta* philosophy known as *Vedanta Syamantaka*; the "jewel of factual principles" (outline the nine principles held in common by both the Madhva and Chaitanya schools) known as *Prameya Ratnavali*; a summary of Gaudiya Vaishnava principles called the *Siddhanta Darpana*; the *Kavya Kaustubha* (a book of selected Sanskrit verses for Vaishnavas); the *Aishvarya Kadambini*; *Vyakarana Kaumudi* (a book on grammar); *Padakaustubha* (selected prayers); commentaries on important *Upanishads* beginning with the Isha *Upanishad* and including the *Gopala Tapani Upanishad*; a commentary on *Bhagavad-gita* known as *Gitabhushana Bhashya*; as well as commentaries on: *Vishnu-Sahasra-nama*, *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* (*Vaishnava-nandini-tika*), Jiva Goswami's *Tattva-Sandarbha*, Rupa Goswami's *Stavamala*, *Nata-chandrika*, Jayadeva Goswami's *Chandraloka*, his own *Sahitya Kaumudi*, *Laghu-bhagavatamrita*, *Nataka-Chandrika*, and *Shyamananda Shataka*. Shri Baladeva Vidyabhusana disappeared in the Christian year 1768.

Lives of the Saints: Chapter Three
Bhugarbha Goswami

Just as there is very little mentioned in the scriptures about the life of Śrīla Lokanātha Goswāmī, in the same way, there is little written about his dear friend Śrīla Bhugarbha Goswāmī. Śrīla Lokanātha and Śrī Bhugarbha Goswāmī were of one heart and mind. On the order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu they went to live in Vṛndāvana. Bhugarbha Goswāmī was a disciple of Gadādhara Paṇdita. Among his disciples were Śrī Govindadev's *pūjārī* Caitanya dāsa, as well as Mukundānanda Cakravartī, Premī Kṛṣṇadāsa and others.

Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī writes: "The eleventh branch of Gadādhara Goswāmī was Bhugarbha Goswāmī and the twelfth was Bhāgavata dāsa. Both of them went to Vṛndāvana and resided there for life." Śrī Kavikarṇapura writes in his *Gaura-gaṇodeśa-dipikā* that Bhugarbha Goswāmī was formerly the *gopī* named Prema Mañjarī in Vṛndāvana. While in Vṛndāvana, Bhugarbha Goswāmī passed away and entered into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord on the fourteenth day of the full moon in the month of Kārtika.

Lokanātha Goswāmī and Bhugarbha Goswāmī lived together in Vṛndāvana as one. Śrīla Narahari Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes about them in his *Bhakti-ratnākara*: "Bhugarbha Goswāmī and Lokanātha Goswāmī were world-preachers; they were so close and affectionate to one another that they were like one body."

In Vṛndāvana, Bhugarbha Goswāmī and Lokanātha Goswāmī were regarded as among the principle Goswāmīs, as they were senior by age and experience to many. The foremost among the subsequent followers of Rūpa Goswāmī, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, writes about Bhugarbha Goswāmī, with whom he had much affectionate association: "O Hari! Why am I addicted to this abominable path of *karma?* I didn't worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja even one iota, nor could I understand the position of spontaneous devotion—*rāga-marga*. Svarūpa Dāmodara, Sanātana Goswāmī, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa. Raghunātha dāsa, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, Bhugarbha Goswāmī, Jīva Goswāmī, and Lokanātha Goswāmī—I never offered a drop of service to their lotus feet. How then shall I attain the goal of life? Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja is among the most exalted *rasika-bhaktas*, devotees whose sole interest is in relishing the mellows of devotion to Rādhā-Govinda and Mahāprabhu. He compiled the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* which describes the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya and the *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, describing the pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Hearing the pastimes of Gaura-Govinda would melt even stone, but it had no effect on my

consciousness. Not only have I failed to take advantage of the association of all these great souls, but I have also neglected their associates and followers. What a sad story my life has become. My life and birth are all useless. Shame on me. Alas, alas. Thus laments Narottama das.

Lives of the Saints: Chapter Four

Shri Birchandra Prabhu

Shrimad Birchandra or Birabhadra Prabhu took birth within this world on the ninth day of the dark moon in the month of Kartik, which corresponds to the divine appearance day of Shri Shrimad Bhakti Raksaka Shridhar Maharaja. Shri Krishna das Kaviraja Goswami writes (CC Adi 11.8-12):

"Shri Nityananda Prabhu is the topmost branch of the indestructible tree of eternal love of Godhead, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu...From that branch grow many branches and sub-branches...After Nityananda Prabhu, the greatest branch is Birbhadra Goswami (Birchandra Prabhu)...although Birabhadra Prabhu was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He presented Himself as a great devotee. And although the Supmre Godhead is transcendental to all Vedic injunctions, He strictly followed the Vedic rituals. He is the main pillar in the hall of devotional service erected by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He knew within Himself that He acted as the Supreme Lord Vishnu, but externally He was prideless. It is by the glorious mercy of Shri Birchandra Prabhu that people all over the world now have the chance to chant the names of Chaitanya and Nityananda. I therefore take shelter of the lotus feet of Shri Birchandra Prabhu so that by His mercy my great desire to write Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita will be properly guided."

In his anubhashya commentary on Chaitanya Charitamrita, Shri Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura describes the life of Birchandra Prabhu. He writes that Birchanrda Prabhu, also known as Virabhadra Goswami was the son of Nityananda Prabhu and the disciple of Jahnava Mata. He was born from the womb of Shri Vasudha, Nityananda Prabhu's other wife. In the Gaura-Ganodesha-Dipika, he is mentioned as an incarnation of Kshirodakshayi Vishnu as follows: *sankarshanashya yo vyuha, payobdhishayi-namakah, sa eva virachandro'bhu-chaitanyā-abhinna vigraha:* " Shri Sankarshan Dev expands Himself as Kshirodakshayi Vishnu. His avatara is Birchandra Prabhu. He is nondifferent from Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in that he is Vishnu-tattva, God Himself." In a village of the name Jhamatapura in the district of Hugali, Birchandra Prabhu had a disciple named Yadundanacharya, who had two daughters—his own daughter by birth, Shrimati, and a foster daughter named Narayani. Both these daughters married Birchandra. The marriage of Birchandra Prabhu has been mentioned in the Bhakti Ratnakara of Shri Narahari Chakravarti Thakura as follows:

"Near Rajabol Hatta is Jhamatpura. Shri Jahnava Mata went there to the temple of one of her disciples. There, lived the brahmana Yadunandan Acharya. By the mercy of Shri Jahanva Mata he was endowed with great devotion. Yadunandana had a wife named Lakshmi. It was said that she was a pure and highly religous wife. They had two daughters—Shrimati and Narayani. Their bodily beauty was wonderful beyond compare. Upon the wish of Jahnava Mata that fortunate brahman gave his two daughters to be wed to Birchandra Prabhu."

Shri Yadunandana Acharya was a disciple of Birchandra Prabhu. Shrimati and Narayani were given mantra initiation by Jahnava Mata. Shri Vasudha's daughter was Gangadevi. She was an avatar of Gangadevi herself. She was wed to Shri Madhava Acharya, who was an avatara of Shantanu Maharaja. The Mahabharat celebrates Shantanu Maharaja, the father of Bhishmadev in Dwapara-yuga, as the husband of Gangadevi herself. Madhava Acharya was a great devotee who was deep in Krishna-prema.

On the order of his mother, Shri Birchandra Prabhu made a pilgrimage to Shri Vrindavana Dhama. First he visited the home of Uddharana Datta Thakura in Saptagrama. Uddharana Datta Thakura's son, Shrinivasa Datta Thakura greeted Birchandra Prabhu with a respectful reception, and Birchandra Prabhu stayed there for two days. From there, he went to Shantipura where he visited the house of Shri Advaita Acharya. Advaita Acharya's son Shri Krishna Mishra cordially welcomed Birchandra Prabhu with a full reception, and there was sankirtan, in which everyone was drowned by the sweet waves of the holy name. From there, Birchandra Prabhu went to Ambika Kalna, where he visited the home of Shri Gauridasa Pandit. Shri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu met him there with great warmth and affection. From Ambika Kalna Birchandra Prabhu went to Nabadwipa dhama to the house of Shri Jagannatha Mishra. Seeing the son of Nityananda Prabhu, all the followers of Shri Chaitanya who were present there were overjoyed, and welcomed him with great happiness. There he stayed for two days, after which he traveled on to Shri Khanda. There he was met by Shri Raghuanndana and Shri Kanai Thakura who received him affectionately and embraced him. After staying there for some time, he continued on to Yajigrama to visit the house of Shrinivasa Acharya. With great devotion, Shrinivasa Acharya offered puja to Shri Birchandra Prabhu, knowing him to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There he stayed for some days, and there was a great sankirtan festival there. After this, Birchandra Prabhu went on to Kanthak Nagara, near Katwa, where Mahaprabhu took sannyasa. After staying there for a day, he continued on to Badhuri Gram, where he arrived at the house of

Govinda Kaviraja. With great devotion, the advanced Vaishnava, Govinda Kaviraja gave him a respectful reception and worshiped him with puja. Being very please with his great devotion, Birchandra Prabhu stayed at his house for two days. After this, he visited Kheturi Gram, the hometown of Narottama Thakura. This is all recorded in the Bhaktiratnakara: "To increase Shri Narottama Thakura's bliss beyond measure, That important branch of the Shri Chaitanya tree, Shri Birchandra Prabhu came to Kheturi Gram. danced in sankirtan. At that time, countless people came to see Shri Birchandra Prabhu, who is Vishnu Himself."

After staying in Kheturi Gram for some days in a great festival of sankirtan, Birchandra Prabhu continued on his way to Vrindavana. By his influence, many sinners and atheists were delivered on the path. When he reached Vrindavana, being informed of his auspicious arrival, and wishing to welcome him as soon as he arrived, the important devotees in Vrindavan waited for him on the road. These devotees were all great souls, and included Shri Jiva Goswami, Shrimad Krishna dasa Kaviraja Goswami, as well as Shri Ananta Acharya and Shri Hari dasa Pandita, who were Shri Gadadhara Pandit's disciples and the pujaris of the deity of Shri Madana-Mohan. Shri Krishna Dasa Brahmachari, Shri Gopinatha Adhikari, and Shri Madhu Pandita were also there, as was the pujari of Shri Gopinatha, Bhavānanda. Kashishvara and his disciples Shri Govinda Goswami (the pujari of Shri Govinda in Vridnavan) and Shri Yadava Acharya were also there as well as many others.

Bhakti Ratnakara says, "Everyone came out to see Birchandra Prabhu, and all the residents of Vrindavana were delighted to take His darshan. There was no one who was not overwhelmed by seeing the manner of ecstatic bhakti exhibited by Birchandra Prabhu. He sang of the superlative qualities of Vrindavana and all the Vaishanvas there. After this he visited the deities of Shri Govinda, Shri Gopinatha, and Shri Madana Mohana and took darshan of their holy forms.

After this, on the order of Shri Jiva Goswami and Shri Bhugarbha Goswami, Birchandra Prabhu wandered throughout the forests of Vrindavan on an extensive pilgrimage. He saw the twelve forests of Vrindavan, Radha Kunda, Shyama Kunda, and Govardhana Hill. And as he saw these things, he exhibited amazing and wonderful manifestations of divine love. All the residents of Vrindavana were enchanted by seeing these demonstrations of ecstasy in Krishna-bhakti. In this way, after gradually visiting all the important holy places in Vrindavanaf, Shri Birchandra Prabhu returned to Gaudadesha. After these wonderful

expressions of divine love by Birchandra Prabhu, his fame was preached far and wide. His divine opulences were nondifferent from those of Nityananda Prabhu.

Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saratswati Thakura, in his *anubhasya* commentary, writes that Birchandra Prabhu had three disciples who are regarded as his sons—Gopijana-vallabha, Ramakrishna, and Ramachandra. The youngest, Ramachandra, belonged to the Sandilya dynasty and had the surname Varavyala. He established his family at Khoradoha, and its members are known as the goswamis of Khoradoha. His eldest disciple, Gopijana-vallabha, was a resident of a village known as Lata near the Manakara railway station in the district of Burdwan. The second, Ramakrishna, lived near Malda in a village named Gayeshpura. Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura notes that since these three disciples belonged to different dynasties and also had different surnames and lived in different places, it is not possible to accept them as real sons of Virachandra Prabhu.

Birchandra Prabhu's youngest disciple, Ramchandra had four sons, of whom the eldest was Radha-madhava, whose third son was named Yadavendra. Yadavendra's son was Nandakirshora, his son was Nidhikrishna, his son was Chaitanyachand, his son was Krishna Mohan, his son was Jaganmohana, his son was Vrajanatha, and his son was Shyamalal Goswami.

Lives of the Saints
Devananda Pandit

Devānanda Paṇḍita lived in Nabadwīpa-dhāma, in the section known as Kuliyā, or Koladwīpa (near where the present-day Śrī Caitanya Saraswata Math of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja is now located). Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu used him to manifest the glories of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the world. Devānanda Paṇḍita was highly renowned for his expertise in considering the sayings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Many people used to go and study the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* under him.

One day Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita went to hear the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class given by Devānanda Paṇḍita. After some time, Devānanda began giving his lecture. He was surrouned on all four sides by his students, who listened carefully to his reading. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was a highly exalted *rasika bhakta*, a devotee experienced in tasting the mellows of devotion. Hearing the sweetness of the verses of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura fell to the ground with tears of ecstasy in his eyes. Weeping and wailing with tears of ecstasy in his eyes, he began rolling on the ground with his voice choked up with emotion. Seeing all this, the students of Devānanda said, "This man is mad. He is not properly giving his attention to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Throw him out! Eject him!" In this way, the foolish followers of Devānanda, who were devoid of knowledge. Devānanda Paṇḍita saw all this, but did nothing to prevent his disciples from ejecting Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita from the class. If a disciple commits a sin as a result of the guru's ignorance, the guru partakes of the sinful reaction. Therefore Devānanda Paṇḍita also partook of the sinful reaction of offending Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. Without saying a word of this to anyone, and without telling anyone of his suffering at the hands of Devānanda Paṇḍita, Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura returned home. All these events took place before the advent of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.

At length, the advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu took place, as the Supreme Lord made his appearance within this material world. Gradually he manifest his childhood pastimes, his studies, his pastimes of learning, and his pastimes as a young professor, as well as the revelation of his divinity in the house of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura. At the time of that divine manifestation, when the Lord revealed his Mahāprakāśa in the temple of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura amidst all the devotees, he told Śrīvāsa, "Śrīvāsa! Don't you remember the time when you went to hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam at the house of Devānanda Paṇḍita? When you fell to the ground in ecstasy upon hearing the nectarine verses of the *Bhāgavatam*, then the disciples of Devānanda—as a result of ~~his~~ their ignorance of your exalted devotion—threw you out of the class. At that time you went home, feeling distressed, but

you told no one of the incident. Do you remember this?" Hearing the words of the Lord, Śrīvāsa was astonished and fell at his lotus feet, catching hold of them.

One day, as Mahāprabhu was wandering through the towns of Nabadwīpa, he came upon the road near where Sarvabhauma's father, Maheśvara Viśārada Paṇḍit used to live. There was the house of Devānanda Paṇḍita. And at that time, within the house of Devānanda Paṇḍita a class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was being held. From a long way off, Caitanya Mahāprabhu could hear this. Upon hearing Devānanda's *Bhāgavatam* class, Mahāprabhu became enraged. *Caitanya Bhāgavata* records: "With sharp words, the Lord said, 'What does this fellow know about the meaning described by the *Bhāgavatam*? He will never know the *Bhāgavatam* even in many lifetimes. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the literary *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa Himself. The *Bhāgavatam* promotes *bhakti* as the ultimate goal of life. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the essence of the four *Vedas*; it is the literary form of divine love. The four *Vedas* are like milk; the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is like butter. Śukadeva Goswāmī is the churner of the butter, which was eaten by Parikṣita Mahārāja. That Śukadeva Goswāmī, who is dear to me, knows the meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śukadeva expressed the truths about Myself; he expressed my own opinions. Me and My servants are glorified in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; one who finds a difference between Myself and My servants will find all his good intelligence destroyed. An irreligious person who rejects *bhakti* and finds some other meaning in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will never understand the *Bhāgavatam*."

After saying all these things in an angry mood, Caitanya Mahāprabhu, began to flee away from the house of Devānanda Paṇḍita, which he considered condemned. The devotees caught hold of him and begged him not to go. The Lord again said, "All the scriptures sing of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as being highly mysterious, inconceivable. It cannot be understood by vast learning or powerful austerity. One who attempts to know the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* through scholarship will never understand it. One who recognizes that the *Bhāgavatam* is nondifferent from the inconceivable Supreme Controller knows that the essence of the *Bhāgavatam* can be known only through devotion and not through scholarship."

"One who understands that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is Kṛṣṇa Himself can understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. One can only understand the *Bhāgavatam*'s meaning through divine love. If one wants to understand this he must served both the book *Bhāgavata* and the devotee *Bhāgavata*."

In this way, Mahāprabhu spoke many different truths to his followers and then returned to his own home, accompanied by the devotees. From far away, Devānanda

Paṇḍita could hear all these different instructions. But at the time, he did not pay any mind to all this.

After some time, Caitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* and went to Jagannātha Purī. At that time, Devānanda remembered the instructions the Lord had given. He began to think, "Such a great person as this came near my residence, and I did not get to meet him? I could not understand the glories of such a great and exalted Personality as Caitanya Mahāprabhu who was filled with *kṛṣṇa-prema?*

One day in Kuliya, or Koladwīpa as it is now known, Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita went to visit the house of a devotee. That evening Vakreśvara Paṇḍita was absorbed in *kīrtana* and dancing. Hearing the news of this, people gathered from all around to take part in the *kīrtana*. As the night went on, more and more devotees began arriving there. Hearing this news, Devānanda Paṇḍita could not maintain his steadiness. He also hurried to the place where the *kīrtana* was going on. Seeing the empowered figure of Vakreśvara Paṇḍita and hearing his sweet *kīrtana* Devānanda Paṇḍita was astonished. He stood transfixed for what seemed like hours. As the night wore on, the crowd grew and, in attempts to push forward and see the dancing of Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, it became boisterous and rowdy. At that time, Devānanda Paṇḍita, with a cane in his hand, held the crowd back and quieted the mob. When Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, after dancing and dancing, fell to the ground overwhelmed by ecstasy, Devānanda Paṇḍita carefully picked him up and held him on his lap. With his own scarf, Devānanda wiped the dust from the holy body of Vakreśvara Paṇḍita. In this way, it was on that day that Devānanda Paṇḍita began his *bhakta-seva*, his service to devotees.

One day, five years after he took *sannyāsa*, Śrī Caitanya Mahpāabhu returned to Nabadwīpa-ḍhāma from Jagannātha Purī. Upon his return the devotees felt that their lives had returned. Their joy knew no bounds. In order to see the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu thousands of people gathered there. Whoever had previously committed offenses to the lotus feet of the Lord when he had manifested his *līlā* in Nabadwīpa was eager to be forgiven. They all came there to beseech the Lord's forgiveness for whatever offenses they might have committed. At that time, in the place known today as the *aparādha-bhañjanam*, or the place of amnesty (where Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja now has his temple), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu granted forgiveness to all who gathered there and instructed them in the science of devotion.

At that time, Devānanda Paṇḍita took *darśana* of the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Offering his obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya at a distance, Devānanda cowered and shrank away from the Lord, standing off to one side. At that time the Lord saw him and said, "You are the servant of my dear devotee Vakreśvara

Paṇḍita. By your service to him you have greatly pleased Me. As a result of your service to him you have come close to Me. Vakreśvara is empowered by *kṛṣṇa-śakti*. By serving my dear devotee Vakreśvara Paṇḍita you have attained the mercy of Kṛṣṇa."

Hearing these words of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Devānanda was overwhelmed with the sentiments of *bhakti*. His voice was choked with divine emotion, and he said, "O My Lord; O Supreme Master—You have appeared in Nabadwīpa just to deliver all the fallen souls. I am a sinner. I have commited great sins against divinity. I have failed to worship your lotus feet. As a result of this, I have cheated myself out of your causeless mercy. O Lord of all creation; Supersoul of all that lives! You are supremely merciful. By your causeless mercy I have been able to take *darśan* of your holy feet on this day. O Supremely merciful one—please be kind upon me and instruct me in the goal of life. Please explain the meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to me as well. Hearing this humble request of Devānanda Paṇḍita, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu spoke as follows:

"Listen carefully, O *brahmaṇa*. Always praise *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Never let any explanation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* other than *bhakti* issue forth from your lips. From beginning, middle to end, this is its meaning: constant devotion to Kṛṣṇa is eternally perfect flawless, and infallible. It is the highest goal of life. The Supreme Lord appears in innumerable *avatāras* beginning with Kūrma. His appearance and disappearance is transcendental. In the same way, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is not a material creation: its appearance and disappearance is completely divine. In a trance of *bhakti-yoga* Vyāsa compiled the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It passed through him and appeared on his tongue as a result of the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. If one doesn't understand that the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is divine truth on the level of God Himself he will never realize its meaning. This is the verdict of all authorized scriptures. One who understands the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in that way has real knowledge. If one approaches the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with material knowledge he will never understand it. If, however, one is unlearned but takes shelter of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* he will be enlightened with its meaning. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is filled with divine love, *prema*. It is an extension of Kṛṣṇa Himself and it reveals his confidential pastimes of divine love.

"O *brahmaṇa*! Previously you committed an offense to the lotus feet of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. You must go to him and beg forgiveness at his lotus feet. There is no difference between the book *Bhagavata* and the *bhakta bhagavata*. If you get the mercy of the *bhakta bhagavata* then you will easily attain the mercy of the book *Bhagavata*."

Having thus heard the words of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Devānanda Paṇḍita immediately went to Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura and begged forgiveness for his offenses. At that time, Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura embraced Devānanda and forgave his offenses. The four directions were

filled with the sound of the holy name of Hari as the devotees were all jubilant upon Mahāprabhu's return to Nabadwīpa-dhāma. From that day on, Devānanda Paṇḍita was accepted in the midst of the followers of Mahāprabhu as a great devotee. Devānanda Paṇḍita's disappearance day falls on the dark moon *ekādaśī* of the month of Pauṣa, which corresponds to the month of December.

Lives of the Saints
Dhananjaya Pandit

Caitanya-Bhāgavata says that Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita had all the symptoms of a great personality. At every moment he was dear to Nityānanda Prabhu's heart. In this way, Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura describes the glories of Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita. Dhanañjaya Pa.ḍita's birthplace was in Śītalagrāma. This village is in the Bardhamān district in Katwa and is situated near the Maṅgalakoṭa police station and the post office of Kaicara. Śrī Bhaktivedānta Swāmī remarks, "On the narrow railway from Burdwan to Katwa is a railway station about nine miles from Katwa known as Kaicara. One has to go about a mile northeast of this station to reach Śitala. The temple was a thatched house with walls made of mud. Some time ago, the Zamindars of Bājāravana Kābāsī, the Mulliks, constructed a big house for the purpose of a temple, but for the last sixty-five years, the temple has been broken down and abandoned. The foundation of the old temple is still visible. There is a *tulāsi* pillar near the temple, and every year during the month of January the disappearance day of Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita is observed. It is said that for some time Paṇḍita Dhanañjaya was in a *saṅkīrtana* party under the direction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and then he went to Vṛndāvana. Before going to Vṛndāvana, he lived for some time in a village named Sāñcaḍāpāñcaḍā, which is six miles south of the Memārī railway station. Somteimes this village is also known as the "place of Dhanañjaya" (Dhanañjayera Pāṭa). After some time, he left the responsibility for worship with a disciple and went back to Vṛndāvana. After returning from Vṛndāvana to Śitala-grāma, he established a Deity of Gaurasundraa in the temple. The descendants of Paṇḍita Dhanañjaya still look after the temple worship."

Some people differ with the orthodox opinion of Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita's birthplace. According to their view, he took birth within the Caṭṭagrāma district in the area known as Jāḍagrāma. There, in a place which is also called Śītalagrāma and is known as Sāñcaḍā Pāñcaḍā Grāma is a deity whose service was established by him.

Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita was in Nabadwīpa when Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed his *kīrtana* pastimes there. After he returned to Bengal from Vṛndāvana he established a deity in a village called Jalandi Grāma. The deities of that temple are Śrī Śrī Gopīnātha, Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaura, and a *sālagrāma-śila*, Śrī Śrī Dāmodāra. Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita left no direct descendants. He had a brother named Śrī Sañjaya. His son's name was Śrī Rāma Kānāi Ṭhākura. His birthplace is presently known as Muluka-grāma and is near present-day Bolapura. Some people say that Sañjaya Paṇḍita was the disciple of Dhānañjaya Paṇḍita. At present the service of the deities established in Śitalagrāma by Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita are worshiped by the descendants of Śrī Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita's disciples. Śrī Dhanañjaya

Paṇḍita had a disciple named Śrī Jīva Kṛṣṇa who established a deity of Śrī Syāmasundara which is presently maintained there in the house of a devotee named Śrī Gopāla Caudharī. Śrī Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita's *samādhi-mandira* or memorial resting place may be found in Śitala-grāma. Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita passed away and entered into the eternal pastimes of the Lord on the eighth day of the full moon in the month of Karttika.

Lives of the Saints

Gadadhara Das Thakura

Śrī Gadādhara dāsa Ṭhākura used to live in Nabadwīpa dhāma, but after the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he moved to Katwa. Finally he moved to a village called Eṅḍiyādaha-grāma, where he made his ultimate residence. Gadādhara dāsa Ṭhākura had a disciple in Katwa named Yadunandana Cakravartī. Gadādhara dāsa was one of the eternal associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu. The *Gaura-gaṇodeśa-dipikā* mentions Gadādhara dāsa as the extension of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's beauty and luster. There it is written: "The *gopī* named Candrakantī, who was a *vibhūti* (expansion) of Śrī Rādhā, appeared in Gaura-līla as Gadādhara dāsa, a close associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu." Śrī Gadādhara dāsa was not one of the Gopālas who served Nityānanda Prabhu in the mood of *sakhya-rasa*, friendship. Rather he was always merged in the mellow of *madhurya-rasa*.

Śrīpad Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja writes as follows of Gadādhara dāsa in his *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* commentary: "About eight or ten miles from Calcutta on the banks of the Ganges is a village known as Eṅḍiyādaha-grāma. Śrīla Gadādhara dāsa was known as an inhabitant of this village...After the disappearance of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu Gadādhara dāsa came from Nabadīpa to Katwa. Thereafter he came to Eṅḍiyādaha-grāma and resided there. He is stated to be the luster of the body of Śrīmatī RādhārāṇY, [redacted] just as Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita is an incarnation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is sometimes explained to be *rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalita*, or characterized by the emotions and bodily luster of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Gadādhara dāsa is this *dyuti* or luster. He counts among the associates of both Śrīla Gaurahari and Nityānanda Prabhu....Even though he was an associate of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, he was not among the cowherd boys but was situated in the transcendental mellow of conjugal love. He established a temple of Śrī Gaurasundara in Katwa.

"In 1434 *śakabda* (1534 A.D.) when Lord Nityānanda Prabhu was empowered by Lord Caitanya to preach the *saṅkīrtana* movement in Bengal, Śrī Gadādhara dāsa was one of Lord Nityānanda's chief assistants. He preached the *saṅkīrtana* movement by requesting everyone to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.... When Śrīla Gadādhara dāsa was preaching the cult of *hari-kīrtana*, there was a magistrate who was very much against his *saṅkīrtana* movement. Following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Gadhādhara dāsa one night went to the house of the Kazi and requested him to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. The Kazi replied, "All right, I shall chant Hare Kṛṣṇa tomorrow." On

hearing this, Śrila Gadādhara dāsa Prabhu began to dance, and he said, "Why tomorrow? You have already chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, so simply continue."

"...Śrīla Gadādhara dāsa is considered to be a united form of Candrakānti, who is hte effulgence of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and Pūrṇānanda, who is an expansion of Lord Balarāma's dear girlfriend. Thus Śrīla Gadādhara dāsa was one of the associates of both Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu. Once while Śrīla Gadādhara dāsa Prabhu was returning to Bengal from Jagannātha Purī with Nityānanda Prabhu, he forgot himself and began talking very loudly as if he were a girl of Vrajabhūmi selling yogurt, and Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu noted this. Another time, while absorbed int he ecstasy of the *gopīs*, he carried a jug filled with Ganges water on his head as if he were selling milk. When Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in the house of Rāghava Paṇḍita while going to Vṛndāvana, Gadādhara dāsa went to see Him, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was so glad that He put His foot on his head. When Gadādhara dāsa Prabhu was present in Eṅdiyādaha he established a Bālagopāla *murti* for worship there. Śrī Mādhava Ghosh performed a drama known as *Dāna-khaṇḍa* with the help of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Gadādhara dāsa.

"The tomb of Gadādhara dāsa Prabhu, which is in the village of Eṅdiyadaha, was under the control of the Saṁyogi Vaiṣṇavas and later under the direction of Siddha Bhagavān dāsa Bābājī of Kālnā. Byhus order, Śrī MadhusŪdana Mullik, one of hte members of the aristocratice Mullik family of the Nārikelaḍāṅgā in Calcutta, established a *pāṭavāḍī* (monastery) there in the Bengali year 1256. He also arranged for the worship of a Deity named Śrī Rādhākānta. His son, Balāicāṇḍa Mullik, established Gaura-Nitāi Deities there in the Bengali year 1312. Thus on the throne of the temple are both Gaura-Nityānanda Deities and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities."

When Caitanya Mahāprabhu sent Nityānanda Prabhu to Bengal to preach the nectar of the holy name, he sent Śrī Rāma dāsa and Śrī Gadādhara dāsa with him. Once when he was carrying a waterpot on his head, Gadādhara dāsa, in the mood of a *gopī* called out "Who will buy milk? Who will buy yogurt?" Saying this, he laughed at the joke.

The details of how Gadādhara dāsa delivered the Kazi are as follows: One day, Gadādhara dāsa went to the house of the Kazi, overwhelmed with *kṛṣṇa-prema*, madly dancing and performing *hari-saṅkīrtana*. When he arrived at the Kazi's door, he began loudly calling for the Kazi. The Kazi, enraged, went outside his house ready to chastise Gadādhara dāsa for disturbing the peace. But when he beheld the beautiful form of Gadādhara dāsa, who was the personification of Śrī Rādhika's divine luster, he was stunned. When Gadādhara dāsa embraced the Kazi with great affection the Kazi said, "Ṭhākura! Why have you come?"

Gadādhara dāsa said, "I want to have a talk with you.

"What do you wish to talk about?"

"Gaura-Nityānanda have appeared upon this earth to deliver humankind with divine love by distributing the sweet nectar of the holy name of Hari. Why don't you chant this sweet name of Hari?"

"Tomorrow I shall chant the name Hari."

"Why chant the holy name tomorrow? I have come to deliver you with the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Now you have begun your life of auspiciousness by vibrating the holy name of Hari. From today on all your sins and miseries will disappear by the grace of the holy name if you simply continue this chanting—this is why I have come: to deliver you."

Hearing the words of Gadādhara dāsa, the Kazi was bewildered. At length, he smiled and again said, "Tomorrow I will chant the holy name of Hari." Upon hearing the holy name of Hari issuing from the mouth of the Muslim Kazi, Gadādhara dāsa at once became mad in the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa *prema*. At last he said, "Why tomorrow! Just now you have said the name 'Hari.' All your sins will now melt away and you will become supremely purified by the power of the holy name."

Purified by the grace of Gadādhara dāsa and the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, the Kazi took shelter of the holy feet of Gadādhara dāsa.

In this way, Gadādhara dāsa delivered countless sinners, nonbelievers, and *yavanas* with the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. He disappeared on the eight day of the full moon in the month of Kartika. All glories to Śrī Gadādhara dāsa Ṭhākura Prabhu.

Lives of the Saints
Gadadhara Pandit

From the time that he was a boy, Gadādhara Paṇḍita was always in the association of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita's father's name was Śrī Mādhava Miśra; his mother's name was Śrī Ratnāvatī Devī . They lived close to the house of Jagannātha Miśra in Māyāpura. Śrī Ratnāvatī Devi looked upon Śacīdevī as if Śacīdevī were her big sister. The two of them were always spending time with each other. At the of his childhood pastimes, Gaurahari used to often play with Gadādhara Paṇḍita. They both went to the village school together to study. Gadādhara Paṇḍita was a year younger than Gaurahari. Gadādhara had so much affection for Gaurahari that he could not leave his company even for a moment.

In the *Gaura-gaṇodeśa-dīpikā* it has been explained by Kavi Karṇapura that in Vraja-līla Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita was the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu—Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is confirmed in the notebooks of Svarūpa Dāmodāra as well as in the songs of Śrī Vāsudeva Ghoṣa Ṭhākura. According to Śrī *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*: "No one can describe the characteristics and ecstatic love of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Therefore another name for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Gadādhara Prāṇanātha, "the life and soul of Gadādhara Paṇḍita." No one can say how merciful the Lord is to Gadādhara Paṇḍita, but people know the Lord as Gadāira Gaura, "the Lord Gaurāṅga of Gadādhara Paṇḍita."

The *Caitanya bhāgavata* records that when Iśvara Puri stayed in Nabadwīpa Māyāpura, he lived at the house of Śrī Gopīnātha Ācārya for a few months. At that time, Iśvara Puri was very affectionate towards Gadādhara and tutured him from his book *Kṛṣṇa-līlāmṛta*. From his early childhood, Gadādhara Paṇḍita was very serious and self-composed. He was peaceful, renounced, and fond of solitude. On the other hand, in His childhood, Gaurasundara appeared to be very fickle, unsteady, and whimsical. When they were studying in school, he would distrub Gadādhara with whimsical questions whose sophistry was meant to baffle Gadādhara. Gadādhara didn't like this as it disturbed his mind and his studies. As a result he was forced to keep Gaurahari at a distance. But he couldn't bear to keep aloof from the Lord. This posed a great dilemma for Gadādhara Paṇḍita. The Lord said, "Gadādhara! Soon I shall become such a great Vaiṣṇava that even Brahmā and Śiva will come to me and bow down.

Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita was especially affectionate towards Mukunda Datta. Whenever *sādhus* or *sannyāsīs* would come to Nabadwīpa from somewhere, Mukunda

Datta would tell Gadādhara and together they would go and visit that holy man. One time, from Chattagrama, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi came to Nabadwīpa. At that time, Mukunda Datta intimated to Gadādhara that there was a Vaiṣṇava worth seeing, and suggested they they go visit him. With great jubilation at the prospect of seeing a Vaiṣṇava, Gadādhara Paṇḍita went to visit Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi with Mukunda Datta. When Gadādhara Paṇḍita came before Puṇḍarīka, he saw that he appeared to be a great materialist. His faith was somewhat damaged upon seeing this. He said to himself, "If he is a Vaiṣṇava, why does he appear to be such a materialist?"

Mukunda Datta, knowing the mind of Gadādhara, sweetly sang a verse about Kṛṣṇa-līla. Mukunda Datta had known Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, and by sweetly chanting this verse he awakened his inner consciousness. Hearing Mukunda Datta singing this verse about *kṛṣṇa-līla* from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* he began crying "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!" and weeping again and again. The *Caitanya-Bhāgavata* says that the flowing of tears from his eyes was as if the Ganges had descended. Finally he fell upon the ground, and after rolling back and forth for some time lost consciousness.

Upon seeing this, Gadādhara Paṇḍita felt great remorse within his mind. He began to reconsider his attitude toward Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. He thought, "I thought that this great devotee, this *mahābhagavata*, was an ordinary sense enjoyer. I have committed a great offense. If, however, I accept *mantra* initiation from him I may become free from this offense. I see no other way." In this way, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita made up his mind to take initiation from Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi.

When Puṇḍarīka returned to his external consciousness, Mukunda Datta introduced Gadādhara Paṇḍita to him. Hearing from Mukunda Datta about the character of Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Puṇḍarīka was delighted. When he heard of Gadādhara's desire to become his disciple he was pleased. He smiled, saying, "I consider myself very fortunate. Only after many many births does one get a disciple like this." Soon after this, one an auspicious day, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita accepted *mantra* initiation from Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi.

After Caitanya Mahāprabhu returned from Gaya-dhāma, he began his manifestations of Kṛṣṇa-prema. At Gayā, he had performed his pastime of taking shelter of Īśvara Purī. Once he returned home, he began a new life. Day and night he would float in the ocean of Kṛṣṇa-prema. Seeing Mahāprabhu's wonderful tears of ecstasy in Kṛṣṇa-prema, Gadādhara found himself also overwhelmed with ecstasy. He too cried tears of joy in divine love of Kṛṣṇa. From then on Gadādhara Paṇḍita found it difficult to give up the Lord's association even for an hour. One day, Gadādhara brought Mahāprabhu some tambula. When he arrived at the house of the Lord, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was deeply

absorbed in a mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa. Mahāprabhu said, "Gadādhara! Where is Śyamasundara? Where is that Lord of Vṛndāvana who is dressed in yellow cloth?" Saying this, the Lord began to weep. Gadādhara was stunned and could not understand what answer to give. With great reverence, he humbly submitted, "Kṛṣṇa is in your heart."

Upon hearing this Mahāprabhu began tearing at his chest, but Gadādhara quickly restrained His hands from doing any damage. The Lord said, "Gadādhara! Let go of my hands! If I cannot see Kṛṣṇa I will not be able to maintain my life." Gadādhara said, "If you just remain patient, Kṛṣṇa will surely reveal Himself. He will surely come here before long." With this Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was pacified. Seeing these pastimes of Gaura-Gadādhara from a little distance, Śacimātā thought to herself with great satisfaction, "This boy Gadādhara is very intelligent. I need not fear for Gaurahari's sake." Śacimātā said, "Gadādhara! You must always stay by the side of my son Gaurahari; in this way I shall not have to worry.

One day in the house of Śuklambhara Brahmacāri the Lord was to speak something about Kṛṣṇa. Hearing this, Gadādhara went to the house of Śuklambhara Brahmacari and took his seat within the house. Outside on the veranda the Lord began to speak. As the Lord spoke he became overwhelmed with ecstasy and went into a rasik trance. All the devotees surrounding him also began to swim in the waves of prema. In this way for some time everyone tasted prema-rasa. Gadādhara's prema could not have been more intense. Lowering his head he began loudly weeping again and again with tears of ecstasy. Hearing Gadādhara's pitiful tears, Mahāprabhu said, "Who is that within the house who is weeping so intensely?" Śuklambhara Brahmacari said, "It is your Gadādhara." The Lord said, "Gadādhara! You are most fortunate. From your early childhood you have been a determined devotee of Kṛṣṇa. My own birth was useless. Because of all my sinful *karma* I could not attain Kṛṣṇa." Saying this the Lord embraced Gadādhara in great ecstatic love.

When the Lord was performing his Nabadwīpa-līla his chief assistant was Gadādhara. They who in Vṛndāvana are Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa take the form of Gaura-Gadādhara in these pastimes in Nabadwīpa on the banks of the Ganges. And those who in Vṛndāvana are *gopas* and *gopīs* take part in the pastimes of the Lord in Nabadwīpa by performing *kīrtana*. One day the Lord was wandering by the banks of the Ganges when he came upon a small forest grove and sat down. Gradually he became absorbed in remembering the Vṛndāvana pastimes. Mukunda Datta began sweetly singing songs in the *purva-rāga*. Gadādhara, after gathering flowers in the forest decorated the Lord's neck with a garland. Just as formerly in Vṛndāvana, Śrī Rādhā used to decorate Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the same way Gadādhara decorated the holy form of Lord Gaurāṅga. Someone sang a sweet

song, someone performed a beautiful dance. At length Gaurāṅga sat Gadādhara down on the root of a tree which served as a raised platform. Śrī Advaita Ācārya performed the *aroti* to the two of them. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was seated on the left of them. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita Prabhu was taking flowers and decorating them. Narahari was waving the *cāmara*. Śuklambhara was offering *candana*. Murārī Gupta was singing glories to the Lord. Mādhava, Vāsudeva, Purṣottama, Vijaya, and Mukunda, as well as others sang different songs in various *rāgas*.

In this way, the Lord finished his Nadiya-līla; he performed his *sannyāsa-līla* and left his mother and his country and went to live in Jagannātha Purī. At that time Gadādhara Paṇḍita followed Him and also went to Jagnnātha Purī, to live. There Gadādhara Paṇḍita engaged himself in the service of the Śrī Gopīnātha deity. At that time the Lord would regularly go and visit his dear Gadādhara to float in the waves of *rasa* by discussing Kṛṣṇa. When the Lord made his pilgrimage to Vṛndāvana, he forbade Gadādhara Paṇḍita to go with Him. At that time, his separation knew no bounds.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita use to teach a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class. His eternal companion, Śrī Gaurasundara used to sit and hear from him. Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita's discussion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was like an ocean of nectar. After the forty-eight years of the Lord's manifest pastimes were over, He disappeared into the Gopīnātha deity of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. This is recorded in *Bhakti-ratnākāra*.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written:

smara gaura gadādhara kelikalāṁ
bhava gaura gadādhara pakṣacaraṁ
śṛṇu gaura gadādhara cārukathāṁ
bhaja godruma-kānana kuñjavidhum

Remember the wonderful pastimes of Gaura and Gadādhara. Become a servant of Gaura and Gadādhara. Listen to the beautiful narrations concerning Gaura and Gadādhara, and worship Lord Gaura, the beautiful moon of the groves of Godrum.

Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita Goswāmī's appearance day is on the dark moon day of the month of Vaiśākha.

Shri Gangamata Goswamini

Within the present state of Bengal, lies what was once the kingdom of Sri Naresh Narayana. King Naresh Narayana had a daughter named Sachi. From early childhood, Sachi was a topmost devotee of the Lord. Within a short time, Sachi began her education. At first she absorbed herself in grammar and poetry, but having become expert in these, she gradually became completely immersed in endlessly studying the scriptures. Even as a young girl, she was always fascinated with Krishna consciousness. As Sachi came of age, all the young boys were charmed by her beauty. But within Sachi's mind there was not the least attraction for any of the young men, no matter how handsome or rich they were. Her mind was always filled with thoughts of Madana Gopala.

Sri Naresh Narayana began to think of arranging for his daughter's marriage. Upon understanding her father's intentions, Sachi told him, "I will not marry a mortal man, born of this world of death." The king and queen wanted to make arrangements to give her hand in marriage. But Sachi did not want to be wed. Always regretting their failure to arrange for their daughter's wedding, in due course of time, the king and queen grew old and passed away.

After the passing of the king and queen, the royal succession fell to Sachi. Sachi accepted the responsibilies of governing the kingdom. One day, on the plea of seeing more of the kingdom Sachi left to visit the holy places of pilgrimage, after appointing some relatives to govern in her place. Although she wandered here and there, nowhere could her heart find satisfaction. She decided to seek out a bonafide spiritual master. After much travel, she arrived in Jagannatha Puri. One day, after taking darshan of the Jagannatha deities, she received an inner message and was inspiredto go Vrindavana.

With this Sachi felt that the moon of her good fortune had arisen. In Vrindavana, she chanced to meet Haridas Pandit, whose single-minded devotion to Gauranga and Nityananda was unsurpassed. Upon seeing the spiritual power and austerity of his divine form, Sachi became filled with ecstasy. After meditating deeply for several days, Haridas Pandit gave Sachi shelter. Sri Sachi fell at the lotus feet of Haridas Pandit with her eyes pouring tears and prayed for his mercy.

The Chaitanya Charitamrita gives Haridas Pandit's preceptorial ancestry as follows, "Ananta Acarya was a disciple of Gadadhara Pandit. His body was always overwhelmed by the ecstasy of Krishna-prema. He was magnanimous and advanced in all respects. Ananta Acarya was a reservoir of all good qualities. No one can estimate how great he was. Pandit Haridas was his beloved disciple."

In order to examine Sachi's qualifications as a disciple, Haridas Pandit said: "It is not possible for the daughter of a king to go to Vrindavana and live as a poor devotee, constantly absorbed in bhajan with little to eat and no comforts. It will be better for you to stay at home and worship than to go to Vrindavana. "

Sri Sachidevi could understand what all this talk was for. She paid no attention to all these words of discouragement. With fierce determination, renunciation, and austerity, she went on with her bhajan, and her service to her guru. As she absorbed herself in her austere service, step by step she renounced her opulent dresses and fine ornaments.

One day, Haridas Pandit Goswami said to Sacidevi, "If you like, giving up all pride and fear, you may wander throughout Vrajaand practice begging from place to place as a renounced devotee. You have my blessings. " Upon hearing the words of her gurudeva, Sachi's joy knew no bounds. Thereafter, freed from all false ego, her body covered only with rags, she went house to house in Vrindavana, begging alms in the fashion of a bumblebee who takes only a little pollen from each flower. In this way she showed the intense renunciation and austerity of a highly advanced devotee. All the devotees in Vrindavan were astonished by her severe renunciation.

Gradually, Saci's body became frail and weak. She grew thin, and was covered with soot. Still, she took no notice of her condition, and continued following her austere regimen. Physically exhausted from her diligent service she would sleep on the banks of the Yamuna, and then rise again the next day to cleanse the Lord's temple. She would regularly circumambulate some holy places, see the aroti of the Deity, and listen to the lectures on Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Seeing the intense renunciation of Sachidevi, Haridas Pandit Goswmi's heart was filled with pity. His mercy towards her increased. Smiling, he called Sachidevi and

said to her, "You are a princess, and yet you have made such an intense effort to worship Krishna that seeing your renunciation and austerity in the cause of devotion I have become supremely happy. Soon I shall give you initiation into the mantra."

Haridas Pandit had one disciple named Sri Laksmipriya, toward whom he was very affectionate. Just at that time she arrived in Vrindavana. Sri Laksmipriya used to chant three hundred thousand names of Krishna daily. When she arrived, Haridas Pandit sent her to live near where Sachidevi performed her daily bhajan on the banks of the Radhakunda. Taking the order of her guru on her head, Laksmipriya went to the Radha-kunda to be with Sachidevi and help her with her bhajan. Every day Sachidevi and Lakshmipriya would circumambulate Govardhan hill. In this way, in the company of Lakshmipriyadevi, Sachi continued her worship of Krishna with great determination, living on the banks of the Radhakunda, until one day Haridas Pandit called for her to return. He instructed her to quickly return to Jagannatha Puri, to continue with her bhajan and to preach what she had learned of Sri Caitanya's teachings. At that time almost all of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's personal associates had gone back to Godhead, and had entered into their eternal, unmanifest pastimes.

Sri Sachidevi left Vrindavana and returned to Jagannatha Puri. On the order of her gurudev, she went to the house where Sarvabhauma Pandit had once stayed. There she engaged in bhajan and began giving classes on the Srimad-Bhagavatam. The old house of Sarvabhauma was dilapidated and crumbling. For a long time no one had lived there. No one remained there to worship the Damodara Salagram that had once been worshiped by Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya himself. Sacidevi established first-class worship of the shalagrama according to the traditional rules and regulations of the shastra. In order to hear her wonderful siddhantic interpretations of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, faithful devotees would come to Sarvabhauma's house day after day. In a short time her Bhagavatam classes became very famous, and people would come from miles around just to hear her.

One day, the king of Jagannatha Puri, Mukunda Dev, came to hear the Bhagavatam from Sachidevi. Hearing her original explanations of siddhanta, the king was completely astounded. He thought to himself that he would like to make a nice offering to Sachidevi, out of appreciation for her devotion to Krishna. That

night he had a wonderful dream. Lord Jagannatha came to him in his dream and ordered him, "Offer Sachidevi a place on the banks of the Ganges." the following day king Mukunda deva went to Sachidevi. With great humility, Sachidevi offered the king a sitting place and asked him the reason for his visit. King Mukunda dev explained about the vision he received from Jagannatha and how the Lord had instructed him to construct a place by the Ganges for Sachidevi. Sri Sachidevi was not disposed to accept any sort of wealth or comfortable situation and wanted to refuse. But the king kept pressing his wishes again and again. At that time, not wanting to violate Lord Jagannatha's order, King Mukunda Deva issued a decree naming a holy ghat by the side of of the White Ganges after Sri Sachidevi.

The decree let it be known that Sri Sachidevi was a princess who had left everything to come to Jagannatha Puri and preach the holy gospel of Sri Caitanya.

One day the day of Mahāvaruni-snāna approached and Sri Sachidevi wanted to go to the Ganges to bathe. But Sachidevi's gurudeva had forbidden her ever to leave Jagannatha Puri. Remembering the order of her gurudeva, Sachidevi gave up her desire to bathe in the Ganges. That night, Jagannatha came to her in a dream and said, "Sachi, don't think like that—the day when Varuni will take bath that day you you must go and bathe in the White Ganges. Gangadevi has been praying for your association. So you must go to the White Ganges."

Having had such a divine vision from Jagannatha, Sachidevi was very joyful. The day of Varuni-snana came. In the middle of the night, Sachidevi went to the White Ganges to bathe. As seh bathed at Sveta Ganga, the current of Gangadevi picked her up and began moving along. The waters of the Ganges overflooded the pond, and the current ran before her in a flood until she arrived at the Jagannatha Mandira. Seeing this, thousands and thousands of the dhambhasis in Jagannatha Puri became ecstatic and took their bath in the ganges. The four directions were filled with prayers that were shouted in great ecstasy, and there was a huge commotion. In the midst of great jubilation everyone bathed in the Ganges.

In the midst of the comotion the guards at the gate of the Jagannatha temple awoke. They were speechless at seeing the commotion going on in all directions. Hearing a great noise they went inside the temple. They began talking loudly amongst themselves. Hearing all the noise, the king had also awakened. Anxious to see that

everything was all right, the king ordered the gates to the temple opened. At this, the gates were opened. By some miracle, Sachidevi was standing there, alone, inside the temple of Jagannatha. The servants and pujaris of Jagannatha concluded that she must be a thief who has come to steal the valuable ornaments of Jagannatha. Many people said, "This cannot be! There must be some mystery here." Immediately Sachidevi was imprisoned in the dungeons to stand trial for theft. Sachidevi's mind, however, did not become weak or confused. While imprisoned, she absorbed herself in constantly chanting the holy name of Krishna.

Late that night, King Mukunda dev saw Lord Jagannatha in a dream. Jagannatha angrily told him: "Immediately release Sachidevi from your dungeons. It was because I wanted to personally arrange for washing her holy feet that I had the Ganges bring her to my temple. If you want your life to be auspicious, then you had better make the pandas and pujaris bow at her feet and pray for forgiveness. You yourself must take initiation from her.

Seeing this in his dream, the king was repentant, and right after taking his bath, he had the pandas and pujaris go to the place where Sachidevi was being held and immediately release her, falling at her feet and begging for forgiveness. They went there and payed full obeisances, falling down like rods before her feet. The king himself went before Sachidevi, and with great entreaties begged her to forgive him for his offenses at the holy feet of a devotee. At that time, he told Sachidevi of how Lord Jagannatha had ordered him to accept her as his guru and take mantra initiation from her.

Understanding all these things to be the pastimes of Lord Jagannatha, Sachidevi became extremely joyful. Her heart filled with divine love for Krishna. Placing her hand on the king's head, she gave him her blessings. Soon after this, on the order of Jagannatha, on an auspicious day, Sri Sachidevi initiated King Mukunda Deva into the eighteen syllable Radha-Krishna mantra. Along with the king, many pujaris also took shelter of her on that day. From that day forward, Sri Sachidevi was known as Gangamata Goswamini.

One day a smarta-brahmana named Mahidhara Sharma had come to the banks of the Sveta-Ganga to worship his ancestors. Having heard of the glories of Gangamata Goswamini, he was eager to have darshan of her holy feet. After

showing great respect to the pandit, Sri Gangamata Goswamini offered him a place to sit. She asked him what his purpose in coming was. The brahmana pandit explained the righteous reason for his coming. Seeing his genuine earnestness and piety, Sri Gangamata Goswamini explained the siddhanta of Srimad-Bhagavatam to the brahmana. The brahmana pandit was astonished by her explanations of Srimad-Bhagavatam, and dived and surfaced in the nectar of her ambrosial words. After this, the pandit brahmana asked to take shelter at the lotus feet of Gangamata Goswamini. On an auspicious day she initiated him into the Radha-Krishna mantra of ten syllables. Mahidhara Sharma's birthplace is in Dhananjaya-pura. On the order of Gangamata Goswamini, he preached the message of nam-prema, and the teachings of Gaura-Nityananda throughout Bengal.

Gauri Dasa Pandita

In Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Krishna dasa Kaviraja Goswami has written:

tasya shri krishna chaitanya
sat premāmara shakhinah
urdhva-skandhavadhutendoh
shakharūpan ganan numah

"Shri Nityananda Prabhu is the topmost branch of the indestructible tree of eternal love of Godhead, Shri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. I offer my respectful obeisances to all the sub-branches of that topmost branch." Gauridasa Pandit is one of the most important sub-branches of the Nityananda branch of the Chaitanya tree of bhakti. Of this particular sub-branch of Nityananda, Shri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Goswami has written: *gauridasa pandit yara premoddanda-bhakti, krishna-prema dite, nite, dhare mahashakti. nityananda samarpila jati kula-panti, shri chaitanya-nityananda kari pranapati.* "Gauridasa Pandita, the emblem of the most elevated devotional service in love of Godhead, had the greatest potency to receive and deliver such love. Making Lord Chaitanya and Lord Nityananda the Lords of his life, Gauridas Pandit sacrificed everything for the service of Lord Nityananda, even the fellowship of his family."

Shri Gauridasa Pandit's father's name was Shri Kamsari Mishra. His mother's name was Shri Kamala Devi. He had five brothers: Damodara, Jagannatha, Sūryadasa, Krishnadāsa, and Nrishinga-Chaitanya. Previously, in Vrindvana, Gauridasa Pandit was Subala Shakha, one of the twelve most important cowherd-boy friends of Krishna who were known as the *dvadasha-gopals*.

In the Bardhaman district lies the town of Ambika-kalna, not far from the city of Shantipura. In Ambika-kalna lived Gauridasa Pandit. At present, in the house of Shri Gauridasa Pandit there is a temple where the deities of Gaura-Nityananda are installed. In that temple there is an ancient manuscript, which is said to be a copy of the Bhagavad-gita written in Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's own hand, although this is not accepted by some authorities. Hearsay has it that Shriman Mahaprabhu crossed the Ganges in a boat with an oar. Giving the oar to Gauridasa Pandita, Mahaprabhu is supposed to have said, "With this oar, you may help the fallen souls cross over the ocean of material existence." That oar is still found at the temple of Gauridasa Pandit.

Gauridasa Pandit had an elder brother named Suryadas Sarakhela. Sūryadāsa Sarakhela lived a few miles from Navadwipa in a place called Shaligram.

At that time he accepted employment as a secretary in the Mohammedan government. He had two daughters: Shri Vasudha and Jahnava Devi. These two daughters later married Shri Nityananda Prabhu. Of Gauridasa Pandit's brothers, Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami has written: "Suryadasa Sarakhela and his younger brother Krishnadasa Sarakhela both possessed firm faith in Nityananda Prabhu. They were a reservoir of love of Godhead. "

Regarding Gauridasa Pandita, Bhaktivedanta Swami translates the comments of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thákura i as follows: "It is said that Gauridasa Pandit was always patronized by King Krishnadasa, the son of Harihoda. Gauridasa Pandit lived in the village of Shaligrama, which is situated a few miles from the railway station Muragaccha, and later he came to reside in Ambika-kalana. It is stated in Gaura-ganodesha-dipika, verse 128, that formerly he was Subal, one of the cowherd boy friends of Krishna and Balarama in Vrindavana. Gauridas Pandit was the younger brotehr of Suryadasa Sarakhela, and with the permission of his elder brother he shifted his residence tot he bank of the Ganges, living there in the town known as Ambika-Kalna....The eldest son of Gauridasa Pandita was known as big Balrama, and the youngest was known as Raghunatha. The sons of Raghunatha were Mahesha Pandita and Govinda. Gauridasa Pandit's daughter was known as Annapurna." According to Bhaktivinodá Thakura, some of the descendants of Gauri Dasa Pandit are living today in the village of Shaligram.

Bhaktivedanta Swami gives the location of Ambika-kalna as follows: "The village Ambika-kalna, which is situated just across the River Ganges from Shantipura, is two miles east of the Kalakanorta railway station on the Eastern Railway." It may be noted that Ambika-Kalna may be visited by catching a train to Nabadwip--dham at Howrah station in Calcutta and getting off at Ambika-Kalna. Bhaktivedanta Swami writes: "In Ambika-Kalna there is a temple constructed by the Zamindar of Burdwan. In front of the temple there is a big tamarind tree, and it is said that Gauridasa Pandita and Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu met under this tree. The place where the tempple is situated is known as Ambika, and because it is in the area of Kalna, the village is known as Ambika-kalna. It is said that a copy of Bhagavad-gita written by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu still exists in this temple."

When Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, after performing different kinds of pastimes in Navadwipa, wanted to take sannyasa, at that time he went to bid goodbye to Gauridasa Pandita. At that time, Gauridasa Pandita felt great separation from Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

This is described in a song by a devotee named Krishna dasa:

thaku-a panditera bari, gora nache phiri phiri,
nityananda bole hari hari
kandi gaurdasa bole pori prabhur padatole
kabhu na charibe mora bari
amara vachana rakha ambika nagare thako
ei nivedana tuwa pai
yadi chari yabe tumi nischoya maribo ami
rahibo se nirakhiya kai
tomara ye duti bhai, thako mora ei thai
tabe sabara hoy paritran
punah nivedana kori na chariho gaurahari
tabe jani patita pavan
prabhu kahe gauridasa charaho emata asha
pratimurti seva kari dekha
tahate achaye ami, nischaya janiho tumi
satya mora ei vakya rakha
eta shuni gauridasa chari dirgha nihshvasa
phukari phukari punah kande
punah sei dui bhai prabhodha karoye tai
tabu hiya khira nahi vandhe
kahe dina krishnadasa, chaitanya carane asha
dui bhai rahilo tathaya
thakura panditer preme, vandi hoila dui jane
bhakata vatsala teñi gaya
akula dekhiya tare, kahe gaura dhire dhire
amara thakilam tora thai
nischaya jani-i tumi, tomara ei ghar mi
rahilam ei dui bhai
eiteka pravodha diya dui prati murti ya
aila pandita vidyaman
chari jana danrailo pandita vismaya bhelo
bhave ashru bahaye nayana
puna prabhu kahe tanre tora iccha hoy yare
sei dui rakha nija ghare
tomara pratita lagi tora thai khavo magi
satya satya janiha antare

shuniya pandita raja korila randhana kaja
chari jane bhojana karila
padma malya vastra diya tambuladi samarpiya
sarva ange chandana lepila
nnana mate paratita karyarya phirala chita
dehare rakhila nija ghare
panditera prema lagi dui bhai khaya magi
donhe gela nilachalapuri
pandita karaye seva yakhana ye iccha yeba
seimata karaye vilasa
heno prabhu gauridasa
tara pad kari asha
kahe dina hina krishnadasa

"Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, dancing, with Nityananda who was chanting, "Hari Hari" arrived at the house of Gauridasa Pandita to bid farewell. Weeping and weeping in separation, Gauridasa fell at the feet of the Lord and said, 'You must never leave my house! Please heed my words. Stay here in Ambika Kalna. This is my humble submission. If you leave me, I shall surely die. You must stay here. And I will always stay here and view your divine form. You are two brothers. Stay here at my place, and everyone will be delivered just by seeing you. Again I submit—don't leave, O Gaurahari: you are the savior of the fallen.'

"The Lord said, 'Gauridasa, allow me to fulfill your hope in this way: I shall give you an exact copy of Gaura and Nityananda, a murti that you may worship. By seeing this murti you can think of us. My murti is as good as I am. Know it for certain that my words are true.'

"Hearing this, Gauridasa, let out a deep breath and began sobbing and sobbing, wept and wept. Again, the two brothers tried to console him. Still, nothing they did could steady or pacify him. Thus sings the fallen Krishna dasa who aspires for the lotus feet of Shri Chaitanya, of how those two brothers stayed in Ambika Kalna. In ecstasy, Gauridasa Pandit begged the two brothers to stay, and because Chaitanya and Nityananda are *bhakta-vatsala*—always affectionate to ~~his~~ tr devotees—they were captured by Gauridasa Pandit. He imprisoned those two Lords in a temple of divine love from which they could not escape.

"Seeing the great anxiety of Gauridasa Pandita, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, with great gravity, 'We will stay here at your place. Know for certain that we two brothers will always stay here in your home.' Consoling him

with these words, those two brothers manifest themselves in the form of two perfect deity forms.

"The four of them stood there: Gaura-Nityananda and the exact replicas of Gaura-Nityananda. Gauridas Pandit was stunned. Tears of divine love filled his eyes. Again the Lord told him, 'Your wish is fulfilled. These two will stay here in your home forever. You will always internally realize that in this way, at your home we shall eternally stay and beg to eat the offerings you cook.'

"Hearing this, Gauridasa the king of pandits, began to cook. When the preparations were ready, he offered everything before his four guests. After this he offered them garlands made of lotuses and fresh cloth, along with tambula and other fine things. Then he decorated their limbs with sandalwood pulp.

"After all these various things were realized, it was time for the two Lords to go. The two Lords left the two Lords standing at the home of Gauridasa Pandita and left for Jagannatha Puri. To the great satisfaction of Gauridasa Pandita, Gaura and Nityananda in their replica form stayed at his house and ate the rice he offered them. In this way, Gauridasa Pandit rendered service to his heart's delight and enjoyed the pastimes of Gaura and Nityananda. My only hope is to take shelter at the lotus feet of Gauridasa Pandita. Thus says the fallen Krishnadasa."

One day, just to increase the divine love of Gauridasa Pandita, the murtis of Shri Gaura-Nityananda decided to revive in Gauridasa Pandita the Vrindavana conception. At that time they smiled sweetly and said, "O Gauridasa! You were formerly Subal Shakha. Don't you remember? Together we used to have many pastimes on the banks of the Yamuna in Vrindavana. While acting in this way, Shri Gaura and Nitayananda caused Gauridasa to conceive of them in the forms of Krishna and Balarama. In this way, they appeared in the dress of cowherd boys, with a stick for driving cows in their hands. Krishna held a flute in his hands and a peacock feather in his hear. Their necks were decorated with garlands of forest flowers. Their lotus feet were ornamented with anklets. In this way, they brought Gauridasa into the mood of his previous conception. In this mood they revealed different pastimes to Gauridasa Pandit for some time. After this, it was the Lord's wish that Gauridasa be returned to external consciousness. At that time, Krishna and Balaram returned to the altar in their forms as Gaura and Nityananda.

Every day, Gauridasa Pandit used to prepare various wonderful edibles for the pleasure of his deities and offer it to Gaura and Nityananda. He was always engaged in serving them. He was so absorbed in service that he was completely unaware of the pleasures and pains of his own body. Gradually, he approached old

age and became feeble and infirm. In this way, although it was difficult for him to do, he did not cease working hard to cook for his deities. One day, seeing his hard labor at cooking, Gaura and Nityananda externally appeared very angry, and refused to eat. At that time, Gauridasa Pandit embraced them affectionately, saying: "If you don't want to eat this, tell me what you would like me to cook. I'm ready to cook whatever will make you happy." Saying this, Gauridasa Pandita fell silent. Smiling, the Lord then said in great seriousness, "There is nothing wrong with your cooking. But there is no need, at your advanced age, to cook so many preparations. We can't tolerate seeing you go to such a great effort on our behalf. We would be happier if you would exert less effort and just do something simple."

Gauridasa Pandit said, "Eat what I have cooked today. In the future, I won't take such great steps. Everything will be kept simple. I will only cook a little shak and offer it on a fresh banana leaf." Hearing the words of the Pandit, the brothers, Gaura and Nityananda, smiled and laughed and ate everything on their plates.

Once Gauridasa Pandita wanted to decorate Gaura and Nityananda lavishly with beautiful ornaments. Knowing his mind, Gaura-Nityananda decorated themselves with ornaments and then got back up on their throne on the altar. When the pandit entered the temple, he was speechless with delight. He thought, "Where did they get these ornaments?" In this way, Gaura and Nityananda were involved in many different kinds of pastimes in the home of Gauridasa Pandita.

Shri Gauridas Pandit's dearmost disciple was Shri Hridaya Chaitanya. Once around the time of the appearance day of Shri Gauranga, Gauridasa went to the house of one of his disciples. At that time, he entrusted the service of Shri Gaura and Nityananda in the care of Hridaya Chaitanya. Hridaya Chaitanya, in great ecstasy, rendered service to those deities. The festival of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's appearance day drew near. When only three days remained before the big festival that was to take place, Gauridas Pandita still had not returned. Hridaya Chaitanya became very worried. Acting on his own, he arranged to send a written message to the different devotees and disciples inviting them to the festival that would soon be held. Just at that time, Gauridasa Pandita arrived at his ashram. Hridaya Chaitanya told his guru about how he had sent out invitations of his own, worried that Gauridasa Pandit would not return in time to do so. Although Gauridasa Pandit was internally very happy, externally he showed himself to be very angry with Hridaya Chaitanya's acting independently.

Gauridasa scolded his disciple, saying, "In my presence you are acting independently, sending invitations here and there as you please and summoning my disciples at your will. This cannot go on. You cannot stay here."

Hearing this, Hridaya Chaitanya fell at the feet of his guru and offered his pranams. He went to stay under a tree on the banks of the Ganges. A short time later a rich merchant came by on a boat and gave a large donation to Hridaya Chaitanya, saying, "Give this to your guru, Gauridas Pandit." After he went to Gauridasa and gave him the donation, Hridaya Chaitanya was told by his guru to hold a big festival on the banks of the Ganges. Taking the order of his guru on his head, Hridaya Chaitanya began a big festival on the banks of the Ganges. Gradually all the Vaishnavas in the surrounding areas began to assemble there. Taking those great souls with him, Hridaya Chaitanya began a wonderful and superexcellent performance of dancing and chanting the holy name. In the midst of this kirtan Gaura and Nityananda Themselves appeared, singing and dancing. Hridaya Chaitanya saw it with his own eyes. In this way Gauridasa Pandita arranged for a great festival to be held. When the pujari back at the temple, Big Ganga Dasa Pandit, entered the temple he saw that Gaura and Nityananda were not on the simhasana, the deity throne on the altar. He went immediately to Gauridas Pandit to report this incident. The pujari could understand that to increase the prema of Hridaya Chaitanya, Gaura and Nityananda had gone off and joined the kirtan. Seeing the amazement of his pujari, Gauridasa Pandit smiled sweetly. Then, to stop the two brothers from getting away, he took a club in his hand and went off to the banks of the Ganges to the place where Gaura and Nityananda had joined in the great kirtan that was going on there. He soon arrived at the banks of the Ganges where the kirtan was going on. He could see the two brothers dancing in ecstasy. But when the two brothers, Gaura and Nityananda saw the angry mood of Gauridas Pandita, they became invisible.

Shri Gauridas Pandit could see that Gaura and Nityananda had entered into the temple of Hridaya Chaitanya's heart. Beholding this in great wonder and ecstasy, Gauridasa Pandit could not hold himself back—he began crying tears of ecstasy. He forgot his external show of anger at the two brothers, and holding his disicple Shri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu in his arms, he said, "You are truly fortunate. From today on your name will be will be "Hridaya Chaitanya:" one who has Shri Chaitanya within his heart. He drenched Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu with the water of his tears.

In great humility and overwhelmed with Krishna-prema, Shri Hridaya Chaitanya fell at the feet of Shri Gauridasa Pandit. After this, Gauridasa took Hridaya Chaitanya back to his house where they danced and chanted in the courtyard in the ecstasy of sankirtan. The devotees filled the ten directions with the loud chanting of "Hari! Hari!" In this way the great festival of the appearance day of Shri Gauranga came to a close. After this, Shri Gauridasa Pandita blessed Shri Hridaya Chaitanya with the adhikara or qualifications for divine seva.

On the Shukla Ekadashi in the month of Shravana, Shri Gauridasa Pandita passed away from this earth and entered into the eternal unmanifest pastimes of Shri Gauranga and Nityananda. His most important disciple was Hridaya Chaitanya, whose most important disciple was Shri Shyamananda prabhu. Shri Narahari Chakravarti Thakura records all the history of Gauri Das Pandit's life and extolls his glories in the seventh taranga or wave of his book, Bhakti-Ratnakara.

Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami was the son of Vyenkatta Bhatta, a brahmana resident of Shri Rangam, who was initiated in the Shri Sampradaya. The city of Shri Rangam is located on the Kaveri river in the district of Tanjor about ten miles west of Kumbhakonam. Regarding this temple. Shri Bhaktivedanta Swami remarks as follows. "The Shri Rangam temple is the largest in India, and there are seven walls surrounding it. There are also seven roads leading to Shri Rangam. The ancient names of these roads are Dharma, Rajamahendra, Kulashekhara, Alinadana, Tiruvikrama, Tirubidi and Ada-iyavala-indana. The temple was founded before the reign of Dharmavarma, who reigned before Rajamahendra. Many celebrated kings like Kulashekhara and others such as Alabandaru, resided in the temple of Shri Rangam. Yamunacharya, Shri Ramanuja, Sudarshanacharya, and others also supervised this temple.

According to Bhaktivedanta Swami, "Shri Vyenkatta Bhatta was a Vaishanva brahmana and an inhabitant of Shri Rangakshetra. He belonged in the disciplic succession of Shri Ramanujacharya. Shri Rangam is one of the places of pilgrimage in the province of Tamila-desha. The inhabitants of that province do not retain the name Vyenkatta. It is therefore supposed that Vyenkatta Bhatta did not belong to that province, although he may have been residing there for a very long time. Vyenkatta Bhatta was [redacted] in a branch of the Ramanuja Sampradaya known as Badagala-i. He had a brother in the Ramanuja Sampradaya known as Shripada Prabodhananda Saraswati. The son of Vyenkatta Bhatta was later known in the Gaudiya Sampradaya as Gopala Bhatta Goswami and he established the Radha-ramana temple in Vrindavana. More information about him may be found in a book known as Bhakti-Ratnakara (1:100)by Shri Narahari Cakravarti.

The Gaura-parshada-charitavali describes the life of Gopala Bhatta Goswami as follows. The merciful Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in order to deliver the souls of this world, as well as to distribute krishna-prema everywhere, walked throughout the length and breadth of South India and moved from place to place inundating every town and village with the nectar of the divine name. Drinking the nectar of the holy name from the lotus mouth of Shri Chaitanya Mahrapbhu Himself, thousands and thousands of men and women who were burning in the desert of material existence, quenched their thirst. Thus their lives were freed from the burning of material life, and their souls were cooled. Day after day, the fallen people in general drank the nectar of Krishna's holy name and thus attained life's supreme treasure.

In order to shower nāma-prema far and wide like a great thundercloud, Shriman Mahaprabhu came to stay for some time at the great holy place of Shri Rangakshetra. Shri Ranganath's huge and expansive temple is so tall that it appears to reach the heavens. That great temple has seven huge walls. Millions of devotees come to see that deity every year. Within the temple, the brahmanas are constantly chanting the glories of Shri Ranganatha. When Shri Gauranga Mahaprabhu entered that temple and began chanting Hare Krishna in kirtan, his song was far sweeter than that of millions of Gandharvas. Everyone was stunned and astonished, and the hairs of their body stood on end. His divine figure was wonderful to behold, and his bodily radiance was dazzling. From his lotus eyes showered torrents of tears of Krishna-prema. The brahmanas wondered, "Is he a god? Is such a manifestation of ecstasy possible in a man?"

Again and again exhorting everyone to chant the holy name, saying, "Haribolo! Haribolo!" he was drowning in the tears that poured from his lotus eyes, as he fell before the deities like a tree that has been cut down. Everyone thought that Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared like a golden mountain that had fallen to the earth.

Shri Vyenkatta Bhatta, detecting in Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu the symptoms of a Mahapurush, a great personage, could not contain himself as he saw the Lord performing sankirtan. His heart leaped with joy as it became filled with bhakti. Pushing his way through the crowd, he joined the kirtan party and lost himself in dancing and singing the holy name of Hari with the Lord. When the Lord had regained his external consciousness somewhat and had steadied himself, Vyenkatta fell in the dust of his lotus feet and asked the Lord for his mercy. The Lord, saying, "Krishna! Krishna!" heartily embraced him. At that time, Shri Vyenkatta invited the Lord to stay with him in his home during the four months of the rainy season. At his home Vyenkatta Bhatta washed the Lord's lotus feet and drank the holy water. In this way there was great joy within the home of Vyenkatta Bhatta.

The above has been briefly described in the Chaitanya Charitamrita as follows (ML 9.79—86):

papa-nasane vishnu kailo darasane,
shri-ranga-ksetre tabe karila gamana
kaverite snana kari dekhi ranganatha
stuti pranati kari manila krtartha
premaveshe kaila bhauta gana nartena

dekhi camatkara haila saba lokera mana
shri vaishnava eka—vyenkatta bhatta nam
prabhure nimantrana kaila kariya sammana
nija-ghare laya kaila pada praksalana
sei jala kaila sa-vamse bhakshana
bhiksha karaya kichu kaila nivedana
caturmasya asi prabhu haila upasanna
caturmasya kripa kari raha mora ghare
krishna-katha kahi kripaya uddhara amare
tanra ghare rahila prabhu krishna-katha rasa
bhatta-sange gonaila sukhe cari mase.

"After visiting the holy place named Shiva-ketra, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu arrived at Papanashana and there saw the temple of Lord Vishnu. Then He finally reached Shri Ranga-kshetra. After bathing in the river Kaveri, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu saw the temple of Ranganatha and offered his ardent prayers and obeisances. Thus He felt Himself successful. In the temple of Ranganatha, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu chanted and danced in ecstatic love of Godhead. Seeing His performance, everyone was struck with wonder. One Vaishnava known as Vyenkatta Bhatta then invited Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to his home with great respect. Shri Vyenkatta Bhatta took Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to his home. After he washed the Lord's feet, all the members of his family drank the water. After offerin lunch to the Lord, Vyenkatta Bhatta submitted that the period of Chaturmasya had already arrived. Vyenkatta Bhatta said, 'Please be merciful to me and stay at my house during Chaturmasya. Speak about Lord Krishna's pastimes and kindly deliver me by your mercy.' Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu remained at the house of Vyenkatta Bhatta for four continuous months. In this way, The Lord passed His days in great happiness, enjoying the transcendental mellow of discussing Lord Krishna's pastimes."

In the year 1511, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu stayed at the house of Vyenkatta Bhatta. At that time Vyenkatta Bhatta lived with his two brothers, Prabodananda Saraswati and Trimalla Bhatta. At that time, Shri Prabodhananda Saraswati was a tridandi sannyasi of the Ramanuja Sampradaya and Vyenkatta Bhatta and Trimalla Bhatta were also Vaishnavas in the Ramanuja Sampradaya. Vyenkatta's son was Gopala Bhatta. At the time of Mahaprabhu's visit, he was only a child. When the little boy offered his respects at the feet of Shri Chaitanya, the Lord picked him up and held him on his lap, affectionately embracing the boy.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu used to call the boy and give him the remnants of his prasadam. By giving him his prasada in this manner, he was blessing Gopal Bhatta Acharya to become a great acharya in the future.

The Lord arrived in Shri Rangam during the time of Chaturmasya. At that time he stayed in the house of Vyenkatta Bhatta. In Shri Rangam live many Shri Vaishanvas. Seeing the manifestation of divine sentiments in Shri Chaitanya, however, many of them were converted, for they experienced the nectar of Krishna-prema. Every day, one brahmana Vaishanva after another invited the Lord to take lunch. In this way, during the four months of Chaturmasya, the Lord accepted many invitations, and still could not honor all the invitations of the many Vaishnava grihasthas who wanted to show their hospitality to the Lord.

The Lord stayed at the house of Vyenkatta Bhatta. Every day, Shri Gopala Bhatta would serve him personally. At that time, Shri Chaitanya instructed Vyenkatta Bhatta on the position of Lakshmidevi and the worship of Lakshmi-Narayan versus the position of the gopis and the worship of Radha-Govinda. The Lord preached these points to him in a humourous style, laughing and joking in a clever way. The Lord said, "Bhatta! Your Lakshmidevi is the crest jewel of chaste ladies. My Krishna is a gopa-boy who herds cows. Why does she want to be with Krishna?"

Vyenkatta Bhatta said, "Krishna and Narayana are one and the same. Krishna is one of the forms Our Lord takes in order to enjoy pastimes of a clever and sporting nature. There is no violation of Lakshmidevi's chastity if she takes an interest in Krishna—he is one and the same with Narayan. This is not in contradiction with any religious principles. Therefore why do you joke with me in this way?"

The Lord said, "What you say is true. But tell me, why is it that Lakshmidevi performs great penances to attain Krishna, but cannot do so? On the other hand, the Upanishads also performed penances to attain Krishna and did so. How is it that the Upanishads succeeded in entering Vrindavan and getting Krishna's association where Lakshmidevi failed?"

Vyenkatta said, "I cannot understand this at all." At this point he said, "You are Krishna Himself. You know the meaning of your own pastimes. Only those who you choose to enlighten can understand all these things. If you enlighten me, then I can also understand them."

At that time, Shri Chaitanya explained that Lakshmidevi wanted to remain in her position as the opulent goddess of fortune in Vaikuntha and at the same time

enter into the pastimes of Krishna, where sweetness and beauty are superior to power and opulence. This is not possible. Only those who follow in the footsteps of the gopis and the residents of Vrindavana can attain such a position. The Upanishads succeeded where Lakshmidevi failed because they followed in the footsteps of the Gopis. Before this explanation was given Vyenkatta Bhatta thought that Shri Naryana was the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thinking in this way, he believed that the worship of Naryana was the supreme form of worship. Mahaprabhu understood his misconception and corrected it through joking about it. After this, Vyenkatta was convinced of the Supreme position of Krishna and Vrindavan, and converted to the cause of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, although he was raised in the Ramanuja Sampradaya. He offered his respects at the lotus feet of the Lord and the Lord embraced him.

Inthis way, the Lord spent the four months of the rainy season at the home of Vyenkatta, discussing many things about Krishna and His pastimes. After this, he bid farewell. The happy home of the Bhattas was plunged into tears. Gopal Bhatta fainted at the Lord's lotus feet. The Lord gave some consolation to Gopal Bhatta saying, "Now you must serve at the home of your mother and father. Later, you must come to Vrindavan. There you will constantly hear and glorify the holy name of Shri Krishna. In this way, after instructing the whole family, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went on his way.

Within a short time, Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami learned Sanskrit grammar, poetry, rhetoric and became expert in all the scriptures, beginning with the Vedanta sutra. His uncle, Shripad Prabodhananda Saraswati instructed him extensively in the different bhakti-shastras. His scholarship was unparalleled.

After he had been blessed by having darshan of the lotus feet of Shri Gauranga, Gopal Bhatta Goswami's mind was always absorbed in thoughts of the Lord's lotus feet. He began thinking, "When will I again obtain a vision of the Lord?" Day and night he posed this question in his mind and could think of nothing else. And yet, he thought, "I cannot just give up my aging father and mother and go away." In this way, some time went by. At length his mother and father arrived at their final days. They called Gopal Bhatta to their side and said, "Boy, after we pass away, you must go to Vrindavana and take shelter of the lotus feet of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu." Taking the order of his mother and father on his head, Gopala Bhatta went to Vrindvana, always remembering the lotus feet of Mahaprabhu.

When Gopal Bhatta arrived in Vrindavana, he found that Rupa Goswami was preparing to send messages with some devotees from Vrindavan to Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Puri. Shri Rupa and Shri Sanatana Prabhu already knew that Gopal Bhatta would be coming to Vrindavan. Shri Rupa and Sanatana greeted him and treated him like a brother. From that time on, their lifelong friendship began.

When the messengers arrived in Puri, Mahaprabhu was happy to receive them. He heard from them of how Gopal Bhatta had come to Vrindavana. He sent the messenger from Vrindavan back to Rupa Goswami with the kaupin and outer garments of the babaji order, to be given to Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami as symbols of his renunciation. Shri Rupa received these things with great joy. Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami accepted the loincloth and dress of a babaji with great happiness, considering it as the Lord's mercy and prasada. In this way he went on. He was very close to Rupa and Sanatana. He would pass his nights at different kundas, and spent all his time studying the shastra and writing.

Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami had twelve shalagram shilas. He used to keep them in a cloth bag hung round his neck. Still, he had a mind to worship the shri vigraha of the Lord in his deity form. At this time a rich man went to see Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami. Having seen him, he was very happy. Eager to serve, the rich man offered some fine cloth and ornaments for the service of the Lord. Shri Gopal Bhatta placed these things before his shalagrams. The wealthy man bid Gopal Bhatta goodbye.

That night, Shri Bhatta Goswami offered aroti and bhoga and put his shalagrams to rest, covering them carefully in a basket. At last, late that night Gopal Bhatta after performing different kinds of bhajan, took some prasada and went to rest. The next morning he bathed in the Yamuna. When he went to wake his shalagram and opened the basket, he saw, in the midst of the shalagrams, something divine. One of the shalagram shilas had become a full-fledged deity of Krishna with a three-fold bending form, who stood there looking very beautiful. Seeing the unprecedented beauty of this deity, Gopala Bhatta's happiness took the shape of a great ocean in which he was diving and surfacing. Offering his full dandavats to the deity, he began offering different hymns and prayers to the Lord. Hearing this beautiful language, Shri Rupa Goswami and Shri Sanatana Goswami, as well as the other Vaishnavas and Goswamis, quickly went there and saw the world-enchanting beauty of the deity as tears of divine love flowed from their eyes and wet the earth. ~~In the year~~ 1599 of the Christian era, on the full moon

day of Vaishakha, this deity form of Krishna became manifest. The Goswamis named this deity, "Shri Radha-ramana-deva."

After a time, Shri Gopala Bhatta Goswami went to a town called Devavandya Gram in Saharan Pura near Haridwara. There he was received with great delight by the residents. One day, he was on his way to the house of a devotee near the edge of the town. In the afternoon, there was a great storm. On the road was the house of a brahmana in which Gopal Bhatta took shelter. This brahmana was very devoted to Krishna. He saw to the needs of Shri Bhatta Goswami with great care. Shripad Gopal Bhatta Goswami was very happy. The brahmana had no son. Gopal Bhatta blessed him, saying, "May you have a son who is a great devotee of Krishna." The brahmana then said, "I shall give you my first son to engage in the service of Krishna as you see fit."

Shri Bhatta Goswami stayed in Saharanapur and preached the holy name of Hari for a few days before returning to Vrindavana. At that time he went to the Gandaki river and retrieved twelve shalagram shilas from the river. One of these shalagramas was the one from which the deity of Radha-ramana-deva later manifest himself.

Almost ten years past since this time. One day, Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami went to take his noon bath in the Yamuna and afterwards returned to his kutir to perform his bhajan. From a distance he culd see a young boy sitting in the door of his hut. When the boy saw Shri Bhatta Goswami he arose and offered his obeisances at the Goswami's feet. Shri Gopal Bhatta asked him, "Who are you?" He boy said, "I am from Devavandya Gram in Saharan Pura. I have come from there."

Bhatta Goswami said, "Who is your father?" Why have you come to me?" The boy said, "My father has sent me here to engage in your service. My name is Gopinatha." With this, Gopal Bhatta remembered his previous conversation with the boy's father, in which the brahmana said he would give the Goswami his son to engage in the service of the Lord. After this time, Shri Gopinatha served Shri Bhatta Goswami with great attention and regard.

Subsequently that boy became known as Shri Gopinatha Pujari Goswami. He remained a brahmachari and served the Radha-ramana deity up until his death. Eventually his younger brother Shri Damodara Dasa took mantra initiation from Shri Gopinathaji and also engaged in the service of Shri Radharamana. Shri Damoadara Dasa had three sons, Harinatha, Mathuranatha, and Harinama.

Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami served his beloved Radha-ramana deity constantly, remembering the words and teachings of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

While serving in this way, the eyes of Gopal Bhatta were often filled with tears of divine love that flowed like torrential rain. Whereupon Shri Radha-ramana deva bestowed upon Shri Bhatta Goswami a divine vision of Shri Gauranga Himself. "When Shri Bhatta Goswami was overwhelmed by Krishna-prema, Shri Radha-ramana revealed himself as Shri Gauranga deva." *Bhakti Ratnakara* 4th *Taranga*.

Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami ~~Shrinivasa Acharya~~ gave *mantra-diksha* to Shrinivasa Acharya. Shrimad Sanatana Goswami composed *Hari Bhakti Vilasa* in collaboration with Gopal Bhatta Goswami, who edited the work. Sanatana Goswami had such great affection for Gopal Bhatta Goswami that he even published the book under his name. Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami was responsible for originating the six thesis of *Shat Sandarbha* later elaborately developed by Shri Jiva Goswami. Jiva Goswami writes in the beginning of his Tattva-Sandrarbha: "A devotee from Souh India who was born of a brahmara family and was a very intimate friend of Rupa Goswami and Sanatana Goswami has written a book that he has not compiled systematically. Therefore I, a tiny living entity called jiva, am trying to assort the events of the book systematically, consulting the direction of great personalities like Madhva, Shridhara Swami and Ramanujacharya. Gopal Bhatta Goswami has written a foreward to Jiva Goswami's Sat Sandarbha. He wrote a commentary on *Krishna-Karnamrita*. He also wrote *Sat-Kriya-Sara Dipika*, a guide to Vaishnava *samskaras* and rituals for birth ceremonies, sacred thread initiations, marriage ceremonies, *sannyasa*, and funerals etc. In addition to this he composed many other scriptures.

In the *Gaura-Gandodesha-Dipika*, Shri Kavi Karnapura Goswami writes:

ananga-manjari sadya gopalu bhattakah
bhatta goswaminam kocidahuh shri guna manjari

"In my opinion, that person who in Vrindavana was Ananga Manjari is now Gopal Bhatta Goswami. Some authorities, however, have given their opinion that he was Guna Manjari."

Shri Gopala Bhatta Goswami was born in the year 1503 of the Christian era on the 13th day of the dark moon in the month of Pausha. Shrimad Gopal Bhatta Goswami lived within this world for 75 years. In the Christian year of 1578 on the sixth day of the dark moon, Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami left this world behind and entered into the eternal pastimes of the Lord.

Shri Gopala Guru Goswami

Shri Gopala Guru Goswami was a disciple of Shri Vakreshwara Pandit. He was a brahmana from Utkala. From early childhood, he stayed with Vakreshwara Pandit and remained under his care and guidance. Shriman Mahaprabhu was always very affectionate towards him and played many jokes on him. Out of affection, the lord would jokingly call him "guru," and so he became known as Gopal Guru Goswami.

Under the authority of Shri Svarup[illegible]amodara and Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, he was instructed in the system [illegible]sa and attained expertise in the rasik principles. At the place where Shri C[illegible]tanya Mahaprabhu stayed at the house of Kashi Mishra, Vakreshwara Pandit later stayed. After Shri Vakreshwara Pandit passed away, Gopal Guru Goswami stayed at that place, where he installed the deities Shri Shri Radha-Kanta.

Shri Gopal Guru Goswami composed a book called *Smarana-paddhati*, or The System for Remembering the Lord. This book has twenty-six chapters. A disciple of Shri Gopal Guru Goswami's was Shri Dhayanachandra Goswami, an important acharya in the Gaudiya Sampradaya. He wrote a book called the *Dhyana Chandra Paddhati*.

Shrila Narottama Dasa Thakura visited the house of Kashi Misrha when he went to Jagannatha Puri. There he met Gopal Guru Goswami. (B.R.8.382) Shri According to some, Gopal Guru Goswami was the gopi known as Tungavidya Sakhi. On the ninth day of the full moon in the month of Karttika he entered into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord.

SRI ISHVARA PURI

Srimad Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes: "All glories to Madhavendra Puri, the storehouse of all Krishna-prema! He is a desire tree of bhakti, and it is to him that the seed of bhakti first fructified. The seed of Krishna-prema next fructified in the for of Sri Ishvara Puri, and then the gardener himself, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, became the main trunk of the tree of bhakti." Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati comments on this section of the Caitanya Caritamrita (CC Adi 9.10): " Sri Isvara Puri was a resident of Kumarahatts. (At this place there is now a railway station known as Kamarhatty. Nearby there is also another station named Halisahara, which belongs to the eastern railway that runs from the eastern section of Calcutta). Isvara Puri appeared in a brahmin family and was the most beloved disciple of Sri Madhavendra Puri."

The nature of Sri Ishvara Puri's personal devotional service to the lotus feet of his guru, Sri Madhavendra Puri, is mentioned in another part of the Caitanya Caritamrita by Kaviraj Goswami as follows: "At the last stage of his life, Sri Madhavendra Puri became an invalid and was completely unable to move, and Isvara Puri so completely engaged himself in his service that he personally cleaned up his stool and urine. Always chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra and reminding Sri Madhavendra Puri about the pastimes of Lord Krishna in the last stage of his life, Ishvara Puri gave the best service among his disciples. Thus Madhavendra Puri, being very pleased with him, blessed him, saying, 'may you have Krishna prema.' Thus Ishavara Puri, by the grace of his spirutal master, Sri Madhavendra Puri, became a great devotee in the ocean of love of Godhead."

Srila Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta points out in his commentary on this verse, "It is by the mercy of the spiritual master that one becomes perfect, as vividly exemplified here. A Vaishnava is always protected by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but if he appears to be an invlaid, this gives a chance to his disciples to serve him. Ishvara Puri pleased his spiritual master by service, and by the blessings of his spiritual master he became such a great personality that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted him as his spiritual master. "

Before Initiating Sri Caitanya, Ishvara Puri stayed at the house of Gopinath Acarya in Nabadwip-dham. There he lived for a few months. At that time he met

Sri Caitanya, when he was Nimai Pandit, and requested him to help him with his book, Krishna-lilamrita. The Lord was highly pleased with Ishvara Puri's devotion and highly praised his book, saying that it was faultless. Still, when he was pressed, he made some corrections with his own lotus hands. This pastime is elaborately described in the Caitanya Bhagavata. The following is a synopsis of Vrindavan Das Thakur's account of Sri Ishavara Puri.

When Mother Sachi saw that Sri Caitanya was happily engaged in his studies, her own ecstasy increased. At that time, Sri Ishvara Puri came to Nabadwipa in disguise. Caitanya Bhagavata records that Ishavara Puri was overwhelmed with the ecstasy of Krishna-rasa. And yet, as he was very dear to Krishna, he was also very humble and didn't want to attract any attention to himself as a great devotee. So that no one would know who he was, he hid his real identity and went to the temple of Advaita.

Upon arriving there, he found that Advaita was busy in service to the Lord in the temple, so he came in and sat down very cautiously and timidly. But the power of a great Vaishnava is not easily hidden from another great Vaishnava. Again and again, Advaita Acaraya kept looking away from his duties in the direction of Ishvara Puri. Finally, he asked him, "O Father! who art thou?"

With great humility, Ishvara introduced himself, saying, "I am a sudra of the lowest class." In this way, the jewel of learned scholars and the best of the renounced, Ishvara Puri, showed how humility is the true ornament of a Vaishnava.

Immediately upon seeing him, Mukunda Datta recognized that Ishavara Puri was a Vaishnava Sannyasi. At that time, Mukunda Datta very sweetly began to perform Krishna-lila kirtan. Vrindavan Das asks, Who is there who can remain unmoved when Mukunda Datta performs his sweet kirtan? Upon hearing the deeply moving songs of Mukunda Datta, Sri Ishvara Puri lost his composure and fainted on the ground in a trance of deep ecstasy. Tears of ecstasy rained forth from his eyes. The assembled devotees were dumbstruck upon seeing such a display of transcendental emotion. When their power of speech returned, they all remarked that nowhere had any of them ever seen a Vaishnava such as this. Sri Advaita Acarya also began to experience grave symptoms of transcendental emotion. After this, they all

concluded their visitor must be none other than the dearmost disciple of Madhavendra Puri—Sri Ishvara Puri. At this, they all joyously began chanting the holy name of Krishna, saying, "Hari! Hari!" over and over again.

Sri ishavara Puri stayed in Nabadwipa for a while. One day, the footpath near where he stayed was blessed by the divine footsteps of Sri Gaurasundara. Mahaprabhu was going home from school. Upon seeing Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Ishavara Puri was amazed by his perfect body and supremely grave disposition. He wanted to somehow make contact with the Lord. Finally, he called out, "O best of the brahmins! What is your name? Where is your house? And what book are you reading?"

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu with great humility offered his humble obeisances to Sri Ishvara Puri. Mahaprabhu's disciples said, "His name is Nimai Pandit." Ishavara Puri said, "You are THE Nimai Pandit!?" Ishavara Puri's joy knew no bounds. Mahaprabhu with great humility bowed his head and said, "Sripada, have mercy upon me and kindly grace my house with your company. This very afternoon we shall prepare prasada for your pleasure. Please accept it. With these sweet and humble words, Mahaprabhu extended his invitation to Ishavara Puri. Accepting the invitation, Ishavara Puri went to the house of Mahaprabhu.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu washed the lotus feet of Ishavara Puri with his own hands. Sri Saci devi quickly prepared various wonderful kinds of preparations and offered them to the Deity. After it had been offered, Mahaprabhu accepted it.

Later, the two of them entered the temple of Vishnu and discussed Krishna with each other at great length. And gradually Krishna-prema sprang up in their hearts and flooded them with the ecstasy of love of Godhead.

In this way, for one month, Sri Ishavara Puri stayed at the house of Sri Gopinatha Acarya. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu would constantly invite Ishavra Puri to visit him. And from time to time Ishvara Puri would invite Mahaprabhu to visit him.

At this time, Sri Gadadhara was a young boy. Sri Ishvara Puri was very affectionate to him. He would read to Gadadhara from the book he had written, "Shri Krishna-Lilamrita." Every day around sunrise Mahaprabhu would come and

offer his obeisances to Sri Ishavara Puri. One day, Ishvara Puri told Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, " You are the topmost of pundits; I am writing a book about krishna's pastimes. You must help me by pointing out whatever faults you may find in this work. This will give me great pleasure. Sitting at the holy feet of Sri Ishvara Puri and hearing these words, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu smiled and said, "The words of Krishna's devotees are as good as Krishna himself. They are in the same category as he is, they are from his "alphabet," not from any material alphabet. Such words are not mundane. One who finds fault with Krishna or his devotees is a great sinner. What a bhakta writes is not mere poetry; it is completely different—it is dear to Krishna, and so is perfect."

"A devotee's prayers of love for Krishna have nothing to do with the rules of grammar and does not depend on them. Krishna is only interested in the love in such prayers. They are dear to Krishna in any case, whether they are properly constructed according to the rules of grammar or not. One who looks for faults in the words of a devotee will never be pleasing to Krishna."
Upon hearing Caitanya Mahaprabhu's words, Ishvara Puri felt as if his senses had been drenched in nectar. Ishvara Puri could understand that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Person. A few days later, Ishvara Puri left Navadwip with some devotees to continue visiting the holy places of pilgrimage.

In this way, Sri Gaurasundara's pastimes of scholarship reached their completion, and the Lord wanted to manifest his divinity. He wanted to reveal himself and distribute the nectar of the holy name of Krishna, and inundate the world in Krishna-prema, thus delivering the world. But first, he went to Gaya to offer oblations to his ancestors. At that time, Sri Ishavara Puri was in Gaya.

After staying in Gaya for some time, When Mahaprabhu had finished his offerings to his ancestors, he went to complete his worship of the lotus feet of Vishnu. when he had darhsan of the holy feet of the Lord, and had heard the glories of the Lord he began to drown in the ecstasy of love of Godhead, and fell to the ground in wonder and delight. By divine arrangement, it was at that time that Ishvara Puri arrived. Upon seeing Sri Gaurasundara, he became speechless. Candrashekaracarya, who was close by was informed of all this. A little time later, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu returned to external consciousness and saw Ishavara

Puri nearby. At once he arose and then offered his humble obeisances at the lotus feet of Sri Ishvara Puri.

At that time, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Ishvara Puri heartily embraced one another. Soon the two of them were drowning in an ocean of tears that poured incessantly from their lotus eyes. At that time, Mahaprabhu said, "Now my visit to Gaya has really been fruitful, as by coming here I have had the chance to see your lotus feet. By traveling to a holy place and offering pinda one may deliverer one's ancestors—that is, the person who offers the pinda may deliver only his ancestors. But one who sees you automatically delivers millions of ancestors, and not only will they become free from certain of their sins, but they will all attain eternal deliverance from material bondage. Therefore this pilgrimage I have undertaken is unparalleled, because of your holiness having rendered everything perfectly auspicious.

In this way, Sri Caitanya mahaprabhu in great humility told Ishvara Puri, "All my visiting of holy places has become perfect because I have seen you. A saintly person is a real "tirtha," or holy place, since he sanctifies the holy places by his very presence. Therefore you are the supreme fulfillment of all holy places. All the holy places pray for the dust of your lotus feet. O Ishvara Puri, in the same way, I am praying for the dust of your lotus feet, knowing which I shall become free from the ocean of repeated birth and death and drink the nectar of divine rasa at the lotus feet of Sri Krishna. Because you alone can free me from the ocean of repeated birth and death, I offer you this body to do with as you wish. You alone can make me drink the nectar of divine rasa at the lotus feet of Krishna, and my desire is that you grant me this gift."

Hearing this from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Ishavara Puri spoke as follows: "Listen Pandit: Upon seeing your learning and character, I can understand that you are divinity Himself, descended amongst men. This very day, I had a beautiful dream. In my dream were many people, and their hands were laden with fruit. O Pandit! To speak truthfully, upon seeing you, I am filled with an unusual feeling of transcendental bliss that surpasses ordinary joy. In fact, after I first saw you in Nabadwipa-dhama, from that time on, I couldn't think of anything else but you. I didn't want to think of anything else but you. I am speaking the truth! Upon seeing you I am as happy as if I were seeing Krishna Himself!

Upon hearing all this, Mahaprabhu humbly lowered his head in respect and smiling, said: "I am supremely fortunate."

A few days later, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in a mood of great humility sought out Ishavara Puri and said, "Your holiness, please show mercy upon me and initiate me in the Gayatri mantram as your disciple. For want of the Gayatri mantra my mind is very much disturbed. "

Sri Ishvara Puri, upon hearing the words of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was very happy and spoke as follows: "Whether I am giving you my words in speech or a mantra, it is my life I wish to give you; I wish to give you everything I have."

After this, Sri Ishvara Puri initiated Sri Gaurasundara in the divine mantra. One day, Sri Ishvara Puri came to the residence of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Upon seeing him, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu became ecstatic. He offered his obeisances and all proper respects and greetings and begged him to stay for lunch. Ishvara Puri said, "I would consider myself extremely fortunate to accept some rice from your lotus hand." Mahaprabhu cooked with his own hands and with great care fed Sri Ishavara Puri. After lunch, the Lord smeared sandalwood pulp over the limbs of Sri Ishvara Puri and offered him a nice garland of flowers.

In this way, in order to acquaint us with the way in which to properly worship the guru, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has instructed us all by his personal example how to serve the guru-parampara. One who does not undertand how to honor a saintly person can never attain Krishna-prema-bhakti. Service to the lotus feet of the guru is the gateway to Krishna-bhakti.

When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was returning to Nabadwipa from Gaya, he passed through Kurmarhatta, the divine birthplace of Shri Ishvara Puri. Upon arriving there, he became filled with divine love and his voice choked up in ecstasy. He soaked the earth with the tears of divine love from his lotus eyes. Before he left Kumarahatta, he went to the place of Ishavara Puri's birth and took some dust from his birthsite. As he left for Nabadwipa, he announced, "This dust is my life and soul!" After this, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa and went to Jagannatha Puri on the order of his mother. At that time, Sri Ishvara Puri had

finished his role in the Lord's manifest pastimes. At the time of his passing into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord, he ordered his two disciples, Govinda and Kashishvara Pandit to live near Mahaprabhu and render service to Him.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta has written: "The best of sannyasis, Madhavendra Puri had as his foremost disciples Ishvara Puri, Nityananda and the great Advaita. In order to honor Sri Ishavara Puri, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the guru of the whole world accepted him as his spiritual master.

Jagadish Pandit

"Shri Jagadish Pandit was the savior of the world. He was a thundercloud of Krishna *prema* who rained showers of mercy upon everyone. (CC Adi 11.30) Shri Jagadish Pandit took birth in Gohati. His father's name was Shri Kamalaksha Bhatta, and he was the son of Bhatta Narayana. Jagadish Pandit's father and mother were both great devotees of Lord Vishnu. After they passed away, Jagadish Pandit, along with his wife, went to live near the Ganges. Jagadish Pandit's wife was named Dukhini Devi. Jagadish Pandit's younger brother, Mahesh Pandit also wanted to live near the Ganges, and so he accompanied them on their journey. They moved nearby the house of Shri Jagannatha Mishra, in Mayapura.

In Bhaktivinod Thakur's *Anubhashya* commentary on Caitanya Caritamrita, (CC Adi 11.30) there is further information about Jagadish Pandit: "He lived in the village of Yashora Gram in the district of Nadia near the Chakadoha railway station. Shri Gaurasundara ordered Jagadish Pandit to preach the glories of the holy name of Krishna in Jagannatha Puri. On the order of Mahaprabhu, he went to Puri and there, taking permission from Lord Jagannatha, brought a Shri Murti of Jagannatha back to Yashora Grama, where the deity was installed. It is said that Jagadish Pandit carried him on a stick. At present the stick used to bear the Jagannatha deity by Jagadish Pandit is on display at the Jagannatha temple in Yashora Gram."

Shri Gaurasundara and Shri Nityananda Prabhu used to visit Yashora Gram from time to time and hold sankirtan festivals. Shri Jagadish Pandit had a son named Ramabhadra Goswami. At the temple in Yashora Grama there are deities of Jagannatha Dev, Shri Radha-Vallabha, and Gaura Gopal. It is said that the Gaura Gopal deities were installed by Jagadish Pandit's wife, Dukhini Devi. The Gaura Gopal deities are a yellow color. It is said that once, after holding a festival at the house of Jagadish Pandit for many days, Shri Gaurasundara was about to depart for Puri. Jagadish Pandit's wife was overwhelmed with the pain of separation. At that time, Shri Gaurasundara gave her the Gaura Gopal murtis, saying, "I shall live eternally in your home in my deity form." The Gaura Gopal *murtis* have been worshiped ever since that time.

According to the Gaura-Ganoddesh Dipika: "Some say that in Krishna-lila Jagadish Pandita and Hiranya were formerly the *nagapatnis*, wives of the serpent Kaliya. Others, however, are of the opinion that Jagadish Pandit was formerly a

dancer named Chandrahas. They say that just as Chandrahas used to take pleasure in dancing before Lord Krishna, Jagadish Pandit used to enjoy dancing in the sankirtan party of Shri Chaitanya."

Once, when Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was a little boy, he came to the house of Jagadish and Hiranya on Ekadashi and made them feed him grains. This is described in Chaitanya Bhagavata: "The Lord said, 'If you want me to live, then take me to the house of the two brahmanas, Hiryana and Jagadish. They are devotees, and they have prepared a nice offering for the Lord. Although the devotees must fast on Ekadashi, Vishnu is not bound by such a restriction. He eats what He wants. If I eat the entire offering to Vishnu made by those devotees, I shall be able to live, otherwise not."

One day, baby Nimai was crying without cessation. Everyone said, "Boy! What do you want? Whatever you want you shall get. The boy said, "Today is Ekadashi. At the house of Hiranya and Jagadish many wonderful offerings of bhoga, have been made. If I can eat all these nice things, I will be happy." Hearing the impossible demands of the child, Shri Sachimata struck her head with her hand in amazement. Everyone else was astonished to hear the child's words, and then they all smiled. "How does a child know what is Ekadashi?" The ladies said, "Little boy! If you stop your tears, we shall see that you get what you want." When Jagadish Pandit and Hiranya heard the sweet and charming words of the boy, they were completely satisfied, and let him eat the Lord's offering to his heart's content, even though it was Ekadashi, a day on which devotees fast from grains. Jagadish and Hiranya were great friends of Jagannatha Mishra. They had previously known that the Supreme Lord Hari had taken birth as the son of Jagannatha Mishra. Thus, they were more than happy to satisfy whatever demands Nimai had. They therefore jokingly told the boy, "Little boy! You have eaten what was meant for Krishna!" And as little Gaurasundara ate his rice to his heart's content, Jagadish and Hiranya saw revealed before them the form of baby Krishna Himself. He had a complexion the color of a new monsoon cloud, his effulgence was brilliant as lightning, and his head was decorated with a beautiful peacock feather. In this way, Shri Gaurasundara manifest a wonderful miracle before Hiranya and Jagadish as he sat and ate his rice with great bliss. Upon seeing that wonderful form, Hiranya and Jagadish were filled with transcendental ecstasy and began chanting "Hari! Hari!"

It was probably after Mahaprabhu's sannyasa that Hiranya and Jagadish left Mayapura and went to live in Yashora Gram. Every yearhe would accompany

the devotees from Bengal who would to go to Puri to see Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu for the Rathayatra festival. He was also present at Nityananda Prabhu's yogurt and chipped rice sankirtan festival in Panihati.

The thirteenth day after the full moon in the month of Pausha marks the passing of Shri Jagadish Pandit Prabhu.

Shri Jagannatha Dasa Babaji

gauravirbhava-bhumes tvam, nirdestha saj-jana-priyah
vaishnava-sarvabhaumah shri-jagannathaya te namah

"I offer my respectful obeisances to Jagannatha dasa Babaji Maharaja, who is respected by the entire Vaishnava community and who discovered the place where Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared."

Shri Jagannatha Das Babaji Maharaja was born in the Mayamansingh district of West Bengal. Gaudiya Vedanta-acharya Shri Baladev Vidyabhushan had a disciple named Uddhava das. His disciple was Shri Madhusudana Das Babaji who lived in Suryakunda. Madhusudan Das Babaji's disciple was Jagannatha Das Babaji Maharaja.

Jagannatha Dasa Babaji lived in Vrindavan and performed his bhajan there for quite some time. He became famous among the devotees there as one who was perfect in Krishna-bhakti. In 1880, Shrimad Bhaktivinoda Thakura went to Vrindavan and saw his lotus feet for the first time. While there, he received many divine instructions on Hari-bhakti from Jagannatha Dasa. Some time later, Babaji Maharaja visited the Barddhaman district during the month of Phalgun. He stayed at a town called Amalajorha. At that time, Bhaktivinoda Thakura again had the good fortune to take darshan of his holy feet.

Seeing Bhaktivinoda Thakur's enthusiasm for preaching the holy name of Krishna, Shrila Babaji Maharaja was very happy. He stayed in Amalajorha during ekadashi, and that night there was kirtan and Hari-katha. Later, at Amalajorha, Shrila Bhaktivinoda Thakura established his Prappana-Ashram.

In 1893, Shrila Babaji Maharaja went from Koladwip (the part of Nabadwipa where Shrila Shridhara Maharaja's temple is presently located) to Surabhi-kunja in Godrumadwipa. There he took his seat. His arrival in Surabhi-kunja was a wonderful event. Shri Jagannatha Das Babaji revealed many lost holy places in Mayapura, including the Yogapith, Shrivasa Angana, and others. It is said that when he came upon the holy place of Mahaprabhu's birth he danced, although he was very old and walked with difficulty. For some time he remained in Nadia and performed his bhajan on the banks of the Ganges. His bhajan kutir and samadhi mandir are still there at present. He ordered Bhaktivinoda Thakura to build a hut so devotees could stay near his bhajan kutir, and Bhaktivinoda did so.

When Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura was twelve years old, he was an expert in the Jyoti-shastras explaining Vedic astrology. Hearing this, Shrila Babaji Maharaja one day called upon him to prepare the Vaishnava calendar in accordance with

the proper siddhanta. He did so and Babaji Maharaja was very pleased. With this, the Nabadwipa Pañjika, the Vaiṣṇava calendar recording the dates of the appearance and disappearance of important Vaishnava saints and the celebration of important festivals, began.

Shrila Babaji Maharaja always had great enthusiasm for kirtan and Vaishnava seva. Even when he was nearly 135 years old, he went on preaching the message of Shri Chaitanya throughout the world for the benefit of the fallen masses. In his old age, although he was almost paralyzed by infirmity, whenever it was time for kīrtana he would still raise his arms in ecstasy.

Jagannātha Dāsa Bābajī Mahārāja was the veṣa or Babajī guru of Bhagavat dāsa Babajī Mahārāja. Bhagavta dāsa in turn gave the dress of a babajī Gaurakiśora dāsa Babaji. Jagannātha dāsa Babajī's servant's name was Biharī dāsa. He was extremely strong and powerful. In his old age, Babajī Mahārāja could not walk. Biharī dāsa used to carry him in a basket on his shoulders so that Babajī Mahārāja could move from place to place. When he went to Calcutta, Babajī Mahārāja would stay at the house of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura on Mānikatalā Street. Bhaktivinoda was always very eager to invite him to his house for prasāda, but Babajī Mahārāja was very renounced and would come only occasionally.

When he was in his old age, Babajī Mahārāja was nearly blind. Many people would come to see him and to offer him donations for the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His servant Bihārī dāsa would keep all these donations in a bag. One day, Babajī Mahārāja said, "Bihārī! How many rupees have I got?" Bihārī dāsa had put some rupees aside for some service he had planned to render Babajī Mahārāja. When asked by Jagannātha dāsa Babajī about how many rupees were on hand, Biharī placed some rupees in his hand and kept twelve Rupees aside. Even though his eyesight was failing, however, Babajī Mahārāja detected the discrepancy. "Biharī!" he said, "Why have you kept twelve Rupees aside? Give me all the rupees!" Smiling at this fun, Biharī surrendered the remaining coins to his guru. At that time, Babajī Mahārāja made his wishes known as to how the money should be spent. The total came to two hundred rupees. Babajī Mahārāja ordered Birārī dāsa to take the money at once and buy sweetballs, rasagolas, to feed all the cows in Nabadwīpa dhāma.

Once Babajī Mahārāja was on the banks of the Ganges, living under a makeshift canvas tent. Nearby that place there lived a dog with five puppies. Whenever Babajī Mahārāja would take prasāda, the dogs would come around and lick the food from his plate. When Biharī dāsa caught hold of one of the dogs to drive it off, Babajī Mahārāja told him: "Biharī! If you wish to drive these dogs off, you may take my plate away as well. I shall not eat today." When Biharī complained, "But guru mahārāja, these dogs are

Shri Jahnava Mata

Shri Suryadasa Sarakhela lived in Shaligrama. He had five brothers: Damodara, Jagannatha, Gauridasa, Krishna dasa, and Nrishinga Chaitanya. His fathers name was Shri Kamsari Mishra and his mother's name was Shri Kamala Devi. Surya dasa used to be the King's treasurer, and it was in this connection that he was given the title "Sarakhela."

Shri Suryadasa Sarakhela had two daughters. The older of the two was named Shri Vasudha and the younger was named Shri Jahnava. The Gaura-Ganodesha-dipika says: *shri varuni revatyoramshasambhave, tasya priye shrivasudha cha jahnava, shri suryadasakhya-mahatmanah sute, kakudmirupasya cha suryatejasah, kecit shri vasudha-devim, kalav api vivrinute, ananga-manjarim kecij, jahnavim ca pracakshate, ubhayam tu smichinam, purva-nyayat satam matam.* Kavi Karnapura says, "Shri Nityananda Prabhu's dear consorts, Shri Vasudha and Jahnava Devi are expansions of Varuni and Revati, respectively. Shri Suryadasa Pandit had formerly been Maharaja Kuk[illegible]ni. His bodily effulgence was as brilliant as the sun. Some say that Shrimati [illegible]udha-devi is the incarnation of Shrimati Ananga-manjari, and others say tha[illegible]rimati Jahnavi-devi is the incarnation of Shrimati Ananga-manjari. In truth, [illegible] opinions are correct. They are both incarnations of Shrimati Ananga-manjari.

Suryadas Sarakhela was a dear devotee of Nityananda and Gauranga. Seeing his daughters maturing into the full bloom of their youth, he began to think about the subject of their marriage. This is recorded in *Bhakti-Ratnakara:* "Suryadasa Pandit began to think about this very deeply. Once, thinking in this way late at night, he fell asleep. At that time, a dream came to him. With this, his mind was filled with bliss. In his dream, he saw himself giving his two daughters in marriage to Shri Nityananda Prabhu.

Seeing this wonderful dream, the pandit swam in the ocean of ecstasy. A little while later, his dream broke. The next morning, he told a brahmana friend of his about his dream. He said, "I saw that Nityananda Prabhu is Balaram Himself. His unprecedented bodily effulgence filled the ten directions with its radiance. His arms and legs were decorated with all manner of wondrous and beautiful ornaments. My two daughters accompanied him on either side of him, and, having assumed the

forms of Revati and Varuni, they were exceedingly beautiful. Certainly I must offer the hands of my daughters to Shri Nityananda Prabhu in marriage. Until he accepts them, I shall never find peace."

In this way, having informed his brahmana friend of his intentions, Sarakhela Pandit dispatched him to Nabadwipa. to Shrivasa Pandita. With great haste the brahmana left, and soon he arrived at the house of Shrivasa. At that time, Nityananda Prabhu was staying at the house of Shrivasa Pandita. The brahmana explained to Shrivasa how Suryadas Sarakhela wanted to offer his two daughters in marriage to Nityananda Prabhu. Upon hearing all this, Shrivasa became happy, and submitted the entire matter to Shri Nityananda Prabhu. The merciful Nityanandna Prabhu told the brahmana to return to Suryadas Sarakhela with the assurance that he would certainly fulfill his heart's desire. When the news came to Advaita Acharya, he became extremely happy. He said, "May all this take place very soon." Meanwhile, the brahmana returned to Shaligrama and gave the auspicious news to Suryadas Sarakhela. Upon hearing this, Suryadas's ecstasy knew no bounds.

In Borogacchi grama lived the son of King Harihora, Shri Krishnadasa. He was a great and dear devotee of Shri Nityananda Prabhu. He was prepared to bear and make all the necessary arrangements for a lavish wedding, putting his own home at the disposal of the entire celebration. Wanting Lord Nityananda to accept this as his offering, Krishna dasa went quickly to Nityananda Prabhu, and prayed that he might be allowed to bring the Lord to Borogacchi gram and commence with the wedding there.

Shrivasa, Shri Advaita Acharya, Shri Chandrashekhara, Murari Gupta as well as all the other devotees of Shri Gaurasundara gathered there and began performing sankirtana. Shri Surya Dasa Sarakhela's brother, Krishnadasa, quickly returned to Borogacchi Gram. Nityananda Prabhu also arrived there shortly, as did all the devotees from Shaligrama. Seeing Nityananda Prabhu and all the different devotees who had arrived, Suryadas Sarakhela ran out on the road before them in great ecstasy and, welcoming them, invited them to his own home, after falling before the lotus feet of Shri Nityananda Prabhu in humble submission. The Bhakti-Ratnakara records this as follows: "Falling at the lotus feet of Shri Nityananda Prabhu Suryadasa flooded the ground with his tears. With his two hands he tightly held the lotus feet of Nityananda Prabhu. His voice trembling, he wanted to

speak, but could find no words. Nityananda Prabhu slowly began to smile, and gradually was unable to contain his ecstatic laughter. Bestowing his full mercy upon Suryadasa, he embraced him. Suryadasa became absorbed in bliss. Who could have understood the limits of his ecstasy? Seeing his brother, Gauridasa also became ecstatic; not being able to contain his patience, was overwhelmed with internal delight.

A little while later Shri Suryadasa Pandita worship the lotus feet of Nityananda Prabhu and offered his two daughters—Shri Vasudha and Shri Jahnava Mata—into the hands of Nityananda. The Bhakti Ratnakara says, "In the opinion of both the scriptures a[illegible] the people in general Suryadasa was most fortunate, having given his daughters in charity to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Nityananda Prabhu.

Thereafter, following the beautiful and auspicious wedding, Shri Nityananda Prabhu remained in Shaligrama Pura for some time. In time, he went to Nabadwipa dhama, and arrived at the house of Sachidevi with his two wives. He offered his obeisances to the lotus feet of Shri Sachidevi. Sachimata was delighted to see Vasudha and Jahnava. She embraced them again and again, sat them on her lap and affectionately pinched them on the cheek.

All the Vaishnava housewives in Nabadwipa showed great affection toward the two brides of Nityananda. On the order of Sachidevi, Nityananda went to the house of Advaita Acharya in Shantipura. When Sita Thakurani saw Vasudha and Shri Jahnava, she floated inthe waves of ecstasy. She also embraced them as affectionately as Sachidevi had. Shri Nityananda stayed there at the house of Advaita for some time, until Uddharana Datta Thakura requested him to come to stay at his place in Saptagrama. There he stayed for a few days, and, after taking part in a great sankirtan festival, went on to Boro Grama. Nityananda Prabhu performed endless kirtan pastimes and wandered from one place to the next for this purpose.

After some time, Shri Vasudhadevi gave birth to a daughter named Ganga and a son named Virachandra. Shri Jahnavadevi, on the other hand, had no children.

After Shri Nityananda Prabhu, Advaita Acharya, Shrivasa Pandita, and many other members of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's personal entourage had gone back to Godhead, Shri Jahnava Mata wanted to further inundate the world with a flood of sankirtan nectar. At that time, in Kheturi Gram, on the Phalguna Purnima day, the day of Mahaprabhu's advent, a great festival was to be held. The three acharyas Narottama, Shyamananda, and Shrinivasa (the three-fold mercy-potency of the Lord) heard that a great festival was to be held in Kheturi Gram at the house of Raja Santosha Datta. They too arrived to take part.

The festival had been arranged by King Santosh Dutta. He was the son of Narottam's brother as well as Narottam's disciple. For this festival, Jahanava Devi herself, the wife of Lord Nityananda, had come. Along with her came her uncle, Shri Krishna Mishra, as well as Shirpati, Shrinidhi, Minaketana Ramadasa, Murari Chaitanya, Jnana dasa, Parameshvari dasa, Balarama Dasa, Vrindavan Das Thakura, and all the other dearmost followers of Shri Nityananda Prabhu. Jahanava Mata first went to the house of Gauridasa Pandit in Ambika Kalna along with all her followers. The disciple of Gauri das Pandita, Hridaya Chaitanya with great cordiality welcomed Shri Jahnava Mata and all the devotees. Shri Jahnava Mata with her own hand cooked the offering for the Gaura-Nityananda deities there. Having had a festival there for one night, they went on to Nabadwipa. Arriving at the house of Mahaprabhu, and not seeing Sachimata there, Shri Jahanva Mata was very unhappy to have missed her, and felt the pangs of separation. Shripati and Shrinidhi then took Shri Jahnava Mata to their own Nabadwip home. Not seeing Shrivasa Pandita and Malinidevi there, she was heartbroken and began to cry. They stayed the night there, and on the following day went to Shantipura. Finding that Shri Advaita Acharya and Shri Sita Thakurani had passed away, Jahnava Mata was filled with grief. Their sons, Achyutananda and Gopala cordially greeted Jahnava Mata and all her Vaishnava associates and welcomed them with a proper ceremonial reception.

At length, Shri Jahnava Mata, along with her devotee associates went on to a place in Kanthak Nagara known as Teliyabudhir Gram, where the brother of Ramchandra Kaviraja, whose name was Govinda Kaviraja, greeted Her with all respect and offered puja to her. After staying there one night, they all set out for Kheturi Grama.

Arriving on the other side of the river from Kheturi Grama, they found that Raja Santosha Datta had made arrangements for boats to ferry the devotees across the river Padma as well as other conveyances to bring the devotees into Kheturi Gram. He also made many other arrangements for the well-being of the devotees, including suitable housing and ample prasada. Everything was decorated very beautifully. Raja Santosha Datta personally came a long way down the road just to welcome Jahanava Mata and her company by offering them flowers and garlands, as well as many other gifts.

In this way, all the devotees headed by Jahnava Mata entered Kheturi Gram while performing Sankirtana. At this time, with Shrinivasa, Narottama, and Shyamananda in front welcomed the delegation of devotees headed by Jahnava Mata by offering their full obeisances with great humility in the dust of the road. The devotees embraced each other in great ecstasy, and gradually they filled the four directions with the ecstatic and tumultuous sound of their kirtan.

Raja Santosha Datta had caused beautiful houses to be constructed to house the devotees headed by Jahnava Mata. He also made arrangements for servants to care for their every need. Gradually the different devotees headed by Jahanva retired to their respective quarters, and after having honored prasada, they rested. Seeing that the service of the Vaishnavas had been properly taken care of, Raja Santosha Datta was very happy.

The following day was the appearance day of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Within the newly constructed mandir, six deities were to be installed. In the evening, the devotees began performing sankirtana. Shri Raghunandana, from Shri Khanda, began the preliminary kirtan. All the people of Kheturi gram turned out for the occasion. Within the midst of that great assembly, Nityananda's shakti, Shri Jahanva Mata looked very beautiful. Upon seeing her, upon seeing the devotees gathered there, and upon hearing the divine kirtan of those great souls, all the atheists and sinners were supremely purified. Everyone had left their homes and hurried out to see the devotees and to drown themselves in the nectar of the kirtan. Everyone dived and surfaced in the ocean of ecstasy, and in this way were drowned in the bliss of Vaikuntha. In this way, the kirtan continued until midnight.

The following day, with great pomp, and before a huge crowd, Shrinivas Acharya himself performed the abhishek ceremony for the installation of the six

deities. On the order of Jahnava Mata and the devotees, Narottama Thakura began to perform kirtan. In the midst of that kirtan, Shri Gauranga Mahaprabhu Himself, accompanied Nityananda Prabhu and all his eternal associates, made his divine appearance. Who can describe the overflowing of ecstasy felt by the assembled devotees there in Kheturi Grama on that day? Those who could remember that festival all attained eternal fame.

On the third day of the festival, Jahanva Mata herself cooked the bhoga for the deities. "Shri Jahnava Devi was extremely delighted by the Sankirtan festival. After purifying herself by bathing in the Ganges at midday, with great enthusiasm, she cooked wonderful preparations of rice, vegetables and other things. Her cooking was unprecedented." (BR 10th Taranga).

Shri Jahnava Mata herself distributed prasada by her own hand to the great souls present there at that grand festival. After the festival was over, Jahnava Mata left Kheturi Gram accompanied by her entourage of devotees, and set out for Vrindvana. On the way there, they passed through Prayaga and Kashi and arrived in Mathura. There they visited Krishna's holy birthplace, and, after bathing at Vishrama Ghata, they entered Vrindavana. In order to welcome Shri Jahanva Mata, some of the Vrindvana devotees met her in Mathura. Shri Parameshvari Das describes this meeting, and mentions the names of the different devotees who turned out to meet her, as follows:

"There was Gopal Bhatta Goswami, a reservoir of gaur-prema, and Bhugarbha Goswami, as well as the highly qualified Lokanatha. Krishna dasa brahmachari and Shri Krishna Pandita, Shri Madhu Pandit and the celebrated Shri Jiva were also present there. All of them were introduced to Jahnava Mata, who was informed of their names by Jiva Goswami. Hearing all this, Jahnava Mata's great ecstasy was increased." (Bhakti Ratnakara)

Having approached Shri Jahnava Mata, all the goswamis present there fell before her lotus feet and offered their pranams, and she allso offered her pranams to them. Shri Jahnava Mata, seeing the ecstatic efforts of the Goswamis was very happy. At last she toured the holy places in Vrindavana and saw the different deities of Vrindavana, headed by Shri Govinda, Shri Gopinatha, and Shri Madana Mohana. The Goswamis had made an extensive effort to see to it that the arrangements for Jahnava Mata's stay were topmost. After some days in

Vrindavana, she went to see Govardhan hill, Radha-kunda and Shyamakunda. When she visited the different places of the Lord's pastimes, different divine moods amd emotions connected with those pastimes awakened within her. In this way, after wandering about in Vrindavana for some time, she returned to Gaudadesha, Bengal.

Having reached Gaudamandala, the greater circle of Mahaprabhu's pastimes in Bengal, She first went to Kheturi Gram. There, the devotees came out to greet and welcome her, led by Narottama and Ramchandra Kaviraja. After staying there a few days, she went on to Budhari Gram. In Budhari Grama lived ther brother of Vamshidasa, Shri Shyamadasa Chakravarti. She proposed that his daughter Shri Hemalata should be married to Boro Gangadasa. On her order, Shyamadasa gave his daughter to Boro Gangadasa. After the wedding, Jahnava Mata gave Gangadasa the responsibilty of worshiping the deity of Shyamasundara. After staying in Badhuri Gram for some time, Jahnava Mata went to see the birthplace of Shri Nityananda Prabhu in the village of Ekachakra. As she took darshan there, she heard about the father and mother of Shri Nityananda, Harai Pandit and Padmavati. Hearing about her father-in-law and mother-in-law, and meditating upon them, She was overwhelmed with separation and began to weep. In the company of a local brahman, she saw the different places of Nityananda Prabhu's childhood pastimes. No one can describe the bliss she felt upon seeing those places. That day she stayed at the empty house which had once been occupied by Nityananda's parents, which had once been Nityananda's home. She passed the night chanting the names of the Lord in kirtan.

Having stayed for one night in Ekachakra, she went to Kanthak Nagara, near Katwa. She say the place of the Lord's sannyasa, and wept. From there, she went to Yajigram, to the house of Shrinivasa Thakura. The devotees there, headed by Shrinivasa Acharya, welcomed her with great devotion. Shrinivasa invited her into his home and performed a puja in honor of Jahnava Mata, worshiping her. In this way, that best of Acharyas, Shrinivasa, absorbed himself in the service of Jahnava Mata. After staying in Yajigram for some days, she again returned to Nabadwipa, to the birthplace of Shriman Mahaprabhu. At that time, Ishan, the family servant of Mahaprabhu was in his ripe old age. Upon entering the house of Mahaprabhu, Jahanva Mata fainted in ecstasy. Seeing her absorbed in a divine trance of ecstasy, the devotees also became ecstatic and began to weep tears of prem.

Fromt he house of Mahaprabhu, She went to the courtyard of Shrivasa, where she spent the night. And all night, in the coutryard of Shrivasa, the devotees engaged in mahasankirtana, dancing and chanting with great enthusiasm, for the courtyard of Shrivasa is where Mahaprabhu began his sankirtan pastimes. That night, Jahanva Mata had a dream in which she saw Shri Gaurasundara and his devotees performing different pastimes.

The following day, She offered her prayers again and again to the holy dham of Nabadwipa, and then turned towards Ambika Kalna and set out in that direction. At again being visited by Shri Jahnava Mata, the residents of Ambika Kalna were overjoyed. Remembering Gauridasa Pandita, who had since passed away, Shri Jahnava Mata wept again and again. She offered her prayers there, at the lotus feet of the Shri Gaura and Nityananda deities. There the devotees began a kirtan, and in the midst of that great and tumultuous kirtan, Gaura and Nityananda personally appeared. That night, Jahnava Mata, as she had done previously, cooked many preparations for the pleasure of Gaura-Nityananda and offered it them upon the altar. Later, she herself distributed that prasada to the devotees there. That night, as she slept, in her dreams she saw Gauridasa Pandita with Gaura and Nityananda. They all offered Jahnava Mata their blessings.

The following day, bidding farewell to the devotees, Jahanva Mata went to the home of Uddharana Datta Thakura. There, after staying for a one-night sankirtan festival, she got in a boat and returned to her own home in Khorodoha Gram. In Khoradoha Gram, upon seeing her once again, the devotees felt boundless joy. With great eagerness everyone tried to push in front of the crowd to catch a glimpse of her. The devotees greeted her with sankirtan. Nityananda's son, Birchandra and his daughter Shri Ganga offered their prayers at the lotus feet of Shri Jahnava Mata, and in turn were affectionately embraced by her. She smelled their heads in affection. After this, Jahnava Mata and Shri Vasudha devi, offered their respects to each other. After this, Shri Jahnava Mata spoke of her visit to the different holy places in Gaura Mandala and Vraja Mandala with all the devotees. Shri Jahnava Mata retained Parameshvari Thakura as a servant. The two of them were unlimitedly happy to see one another once again. The other devotees bid their farewells.

The story of Shri Jahnava Mata's pilgrimage throughout the holy places of Gaura Mandala and Vraja Mandala has become quite famous throughout the

society of Gaudiya Vaishnavas. Shri Jahnava Mata is a reservc prema-bhakti and is known as Nityananda-svarupini—the other self of Nityan. .a Prabhu. She delivered many sinners and atheists by her mercy. Her divine opu.ence (aishavarya) and sweetness (madhurya) are both astounding.

The birthday of Shri Jahnava Mata, the shakti of Nityananda, is celebrated on the 8th day of the full moon in the month of Vaishakha.

Shrila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, in his Kalyana Kalpataru has prayed as follows at the lotus feet of Shri Jahnava Mata:

"Having fallen into this ocean of misery, my life is a bewilderment, and I do not know how to reach its shore, nor even where to search for it. All my efforts (karma) are useless, all my knowledge (jnana) is useless, as are mysticism (yoga), austerity, religious penance, and mundane piety. None of these processes have any power to rescue me. I am weak, helpless. I don't know how to swim across this ocean of ignorance. Who will deliver me from this dangerous predicament? Within this dangerous ocean of material existence I see the crocodiles of sense gratification—what a terrible sight! Within this ocean, I am tossed about by the turbulent waves which constantly boil and churn like a ship without a rudder. The impulses and urges that I have acquired from my previous births are like a wind that blows the ship in all directions. My mind is unsteady. This ship has no captain, no direction. I weep in despair, seeing that I cannot cross this ocean of misery. O Jahnava Devi! Today, by the power of your divine qualities, be merciful to this servant of yours. Dispell this illusion which torments me, and relieve me of the anguish of material existence. Let me take shelter at your lotus feet, for in this way I shall certainly cross over the ocean of birth and death. You are Nityananda-shakti—the divine energy of Nityananda Himself. You are the guru of Krishna-bhakti. Be merciful to me and grant me the shade of your holy lotus feet, which are like a wish-fulfilling tree. You have delivered countless abominable sinners. Please deliver me in the same way. Today, this lowly sinner falls at your holy feet, praying for your mercy."

Jayadeva Goswami

Shri Jayadeva Goswami was the court pandit of Shri Lakshman Sena, the King of Bengal. Jayadeva's father was Bhojadev, and his mother's name was Bamadevi. They lived in the Birbhum district of what is now West Bengal in a village called Kenubilva Gram. He was born at the beginning of the twelfth centrury AD.

Jayadeva Goswami's wife was named Shri Padmavati. When he was the court pandit of Laksman Sen, he lived on the banks of the Ganges. Approximately three hundred years before the appearance of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Shri Jayadeva Goswami lived in Bengal. He was the author of Shri Gita Govinda, which is mentioned by Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami in the Chaitanya Charitamrita as follows (CC ML 2/11): "Day and night, in teh company of Svarupa Damodara and Ramananda Raya, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu used to hear with great ecstasy the songs of Vidyapati and Chandidas, as well as a drama composed by Ramananda Raya. He also used to relish hearing the Krishna-Karnamrita and the Gita-Govinda. In his introduction, Jayadeva says that the Gita Govinda is a scripture describing the intimate pastimes of Shri Radha and Govinda. It may be worshiped and served by those who are extremely qualified in devotional piety. For those who are constantly remembering the rasik pastimes of Shri Hari within his mind, Shri Jayadeva has composed this divine poetic song glorifying the Lord's internal pastimes. He requests the topmost spiritually advanced souls to hear it with gravity and attention.

There are many many traditional stories regarding the life of Shri Jayadeva. The following story is generally accepted as authoritative. One day, Shri Jayadeva Goswami was composing a particulary sensitive section of the Gita-Govinda, describing Krishna's relationship with the gopis headed by Radharani. He meditated deeply on what he had written and became concerned that he had perhaps gone too far in describing the exalted character of the gopis. What he had written seemed to represent Krishna's position as being, in a sense, subordinate to that of the gopis. And yet Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. How could he be subordinate to the gopis? He had been inspired to pen a line stating that Krishna bows down to touch the lotus feet of Shri Radha. But his hand shrank from the page. He hesitated thinking, "How can I commit such an idea to writing? How can I have the audacity to put such a thing it in black and white?" At that time he

decided to go bathe in the Ganges, in hopes that perhaps some inspiration would come to him.

Jayadeva Goswami went off to take his afternoon bath, leaving his wife Padmavati behind to cook the offering for the Deities. While he was away, Krishna arrived at his house in the dress of Jayadeva. Krishna went over to Jayadeva's writing desk, and there found the sheaves of palm upon which the Gita-Govinda was written. Krishna picked up Jayadeva's pen and wrote the verse with the line "dehi padapallava-mudaram," wherein it says "Krishna bows down his head to the lotus feet of Shri Radha." With this Krishna, disguised as Jayadeva, sat down and took the prasadam prepared by Padmavati. After finishing his prasadam, Krishna stepped outside and vanished. Just at that time, Jayadeva returned from bathing at the Ganges. When he asked about prasadam, his wife was perplexed. When she told Jayadeva what had just happened, Jayadeva was astonished. He was he went over to his book and saw there in wet ink the verse he had thought of writing before he had gone to bathe in the Ganges: *dehi padapallavam udaram*: Krishna bows down his head to the lotus feet of Shri Radha. Upon seeing that verse he said to Padmavati, "It is a miracle! See here: what I told you I was reluctant to write has been written here exactly as I thought of it." Tears of ecstasy flowed in rivers from his eyes as he understood the mystery of what had just transpired. "Padmavati!" he said, "You are most fortunate. Krishna Himself has written the line, *dehi padapallavam udaram*, and accepted prasadam from your own hand."

Shrila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written that although Chandidasa, Vidyapati, Bilvamangala, and Jayadeva lived before Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was externally manifest within this world, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's conception of bhakti had arisen within their hearts and was expresed in their writings. Besides the Gita Govinda, Jayadeva Gowsami has written another book called *Chandraloka*.

The famous *Dasa-Avatara-Gita*, describing the ten avatars of Vishnu is from *Gita-Govinda*. Jayadeva Goswami's disappearance day is on Pausha-Sankranti. At present, at Jayadeva's birthplace in Kendubiva Gram, there is a festival every year on this day which is known as the Jayadeva Mela;.

Kaliya Krishna Dasa Thakura

Kaviraja Goswami writes (CC Adi 11.37) that Kaliya Krishna Dasa was one of the principle devotees of Nityananda Prabhu. He knew nothing other than the lotus feet of Shri Nityananda Prabhu. According to Kavi Karnapura's Gaura-Ganodeshs Dipika, He was one of the 12 gopals in Vrindavana, and in the pastimes of Krishna in Vrindavana was known as Labhanga, one of Krishna's cowherd boy friends.

His birthplace is in the Bardhaman (Burdwan) district of West Bengal within a short distance from the Railway station at Katwa, at the village called Akai Hatta. This village is situated on the old king's road between Nabadwipa and Katwa. Akai Hatta is a very small village. On the twelfth day of the dark moon in the month of Caitra, Shri Kaliya Krishna Dasa Thakura disappeared. This is not the same Kala Krishna dasa who accompanied Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to South India. At present, Kala Krishnadas's descendents live in different holy places in Bengal.

Lives of the Saints
Kashishwara Pandit Goswami

Śrī Kāśīsvara Paṇḍita was a disciple of Śrī Īśvara Purī. His father's name was Śrī Vāsudeva Bhaṭṭācārya. He was from section of family *brahmaṇas* coming from the dynasty of Kañjilāl Kānu. His last name was Chaudhurī. Śrī Bhaktivedānta Swāmī writes: "His nephew, his sister's son, who was named Rudra Paṇḍita, was the original priest of Vallabhapura, whic his situated about one mile from the Śrīrampura railway station in the village of Cātarā. Installed there are the Deities of Rādhā-Govinda and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Kāśīśvara Gosañi was a very strong man, and therfore when Lord Caitanya visited the temple of Jagannātha, he used to protect the Lord from the crowds. Another of his duties was to distribute *prasāda* to the devotees after the *kīrtana*. He was also one of the contemporaries of the Lord who was with the Lord in Jagannātha Purī. Śrila Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī also visited this temple at Vallabhapura. At that time, the person in charge was a Śaivite, Śrī Śivacandra Caudhurī, who was a descendant of Kāśīśvara Gosañi's brother. In Vallabhapura there was a permanent arrangement to cook nine kilos of rice, vegetables and other foodstuffs, and near the village there is sufficient land, which belongs to the Deity, on which this rice was grown....It is said in the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* that the servant of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana named Bhṛṅgāra descended as Kāśīśvara Gosāñi during the pastimes of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In our householder life we also sometimes visited this temple of Vallabhapura and took *prasāda* there at noon. The Deities of this temple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda and the Gaurāṅga *vigraha*, are extremely beautiful. Near Vallabhapura is another beautiful temple of Jagannātha. We sometimes used to take *prasāda* in this temple also. These two temples are situated within a one-mile radius of the Śrīrampura railway station near Calcutta."

Caitanya-Caritāmṛta records: "Brahmacārī Kāśīśvara and Śrī Govinda were dear disciples of Śrī Īśvara Purī. When Īśvara Purī passed into the eternal *līla* of the Lord and thus attained perfection, the two of them went to Jagannātha Purī to serve Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu on his order. Since both Kāśiśvara and Govinda were his godbrothers, the Lord honored them as his peers. Only after considering the orders of Īśvara Purī did he accept them as his personal servants, having been instructed to do so by his *guru*. Śrī Govinda attended Mahāprabhu personally as his servant, whereas Kāśīśvara was engaged as a bodyguard to protect the Lord from the crowds when he visited the temple of Jagannātha. Thus he would walk in front of the Lord. When Caitanya Mahāprabhu went to the temple of Jagannātha, Kāśīśvara, being very strong, cleared the crowds aside with his hands so that Caitanya Mahāprabhu could pass untouched."

Śrī Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita was extremely strong. Śrī Kavikarṇapura Goswāmī writes: "Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita and Śrī Govinda were formerly those servants of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja named Bhṛṅgāra and Bhaṅgura who used to bear water from the Yamunā for Kṛṣṇa." Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita spent much time in Purī-dhāma in the service of Śrī Caitanya. He used to serve *prasāda* to the devotees after the *kīrtanas*.

Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita had a disciple named Śrī Govinda Gosāñi who was a great servant of the Śrī Govinda Deity. When Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī was in Vṛndāvana, he established the service of the Govinda Deity. Upon hearing this, Caitanya Mahāprabhu was highly pleased. He quickly sent Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita to Vṛndāvana to assist Rūpa Goswāmī. But Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita did not want to give up the association of the Lord in Purī. Śrī Caitanya, as the Paramātmā, the Supersoul living in everyone's heart, could understand the mind of his devotee. He gave him a deity which was identical with his very self. Kaśīśvara Paṇḍita took that deity of Caitanya Mahāprabhu with him, and by serving and feeding that deity, he was solaced in his separation from Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In this connection, Śrī Narahari Cakravartī Ṭhākura remarks in his *Bhakti-ratnākara* as follows: "Kaśīśvara Paṇḍita told Caitanya Mahāprabhu, 'I cannot bear to leave you behind.' The Lord understaood the heart of Kaśīśvara Paṇḍita and gave him a deity of Himself which was so carefully formed as to resemble the Lord exactly. Seeing that deity of Caitanya Mahāprabhu eating all the offerings placed before Him, Kaśīśvara Paṇḍita experienced great ecstasy. Caitanya Mahāprabhu told him to call the deity 'Gaura-Govinda.' Taking that deity with him, Kaśīśvara Paṇḍita went to Vṛndāvana. That deity sat to the left of the Śrī Govinda deity and in this way wonderful service was performed for the pleasure of the Śrī Govinda deity."

Kaśīśvara Paṇḍita's glories are innumerable and exalted. His disappearance day is on the full moon day in the month of Aśvin, on the festival day which is also celebrated at the Mahārāsa dance of Rādhā-Govinda.

Shrila Lochan Dasa Thakura

Shrila Lochan Das Thakura took his birth in a family of brahmans who lived in a village in the rada-desh, in Mahakumara, near Katwa, in the Burdhaman district of Bengal. When he was only a little boy, he enjoyed the good fortune of meeting the devotees of Shri Gauranga. His guru was Narahari Sarakara Thakura. In his Chaitanya Mangala, Shrila Lochana Dasa Thakura has written: "My hope of hopes is to be near the lotus feet of Shri Narahari Thakura, to serve and worship him with my very life. The cherished desire of the fallen Locana Dasa is to be allowed by the grace of Narahari to sing the glories of Shri Gauranga. My Lord is Shri Narahari Thakura, and I am his servant. Bowing and praying before him I beg him to allow me his service. This is my only aspiration."

Previously in Bengal the poets used to compose sacred songs and verses in different forms of classic rhymes and rythmic meters called Panchali. The Panchali style of composition was especially used for glorifying the Lord. Shrila Lochana Dasa Thakura used the Panchali form of verse-meter in composing his famous work, Shri Chaitanya Mangala. The Panchali form employs five different kinds of song-styles.

Shri Lochana Das's father's name was Shri Kamalakara Dasa. His mother's name was Shri Sadanandi. Lochan Dasa was his father's only son, and so was the darling of his parents. He spent the better part of his years staying at the house of his grandparents. and there began his studies and his education. At a very young age, Shri Lochana Dasa was married. From early childhood, Shri Lochana Dasa had great attachment for Shri Gauranga and at the same time great detachment from material enjoyment. In the prime of his youth he went to Shri Khanda where he found his gurudeva, Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakur, and took shelter at his lotus feet. He stayed there for some time, and there he was instructed in kirtan.

The principal source material that was drawn upon by Shri Lochan Dasa Thakura in composing his Chaitanya Mangala was a Sanskrit book by Murari Gupta called *Shri Chaitanya Charitamritam*. Lochan Dasa Thakura explains this in his Chaitanya Mangala as follows: "That very Murari Gupta who lived in Nadiya composed many Sanskrit verses about the life of Shri Gauranga, which he later arranged in the form of a book. Having heard these verses from Murari Gupta, Damodara Pandit taught them to me, and I memorized them with great delight. As these Sanskrit verses, and the conception of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu imparted to me through Damodara Pandita developed within my mind, it flowed forth from me in the form of these Panchali verses in Bengali, which I write in glorification of the

life and pastimes of Shri Chaitanya." (C.M. Sutra-Khanda) In his preface to the Chaitanya Mangala, Shrila Lochana Dasa Thakura offers his prayers to Vrindavan dasa Thakura before proceeding with the narrative. He says, "I offer my prayers of submission to Vrindavana Dasa Thakura with all my heart. The sweet song of his Chaitanya Bhagavata has enchanted the whole world." (C.M. Sutra-Khanda)

Vrindavan Dasa Thakura's Chaitanya Bhagavata was originally called Chaitanya Mangala. It is said that Shrila Lochana Dasa Thakura and Shrila Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Goswami gave it the name Chaitanya Bhagavata. Krishnadasa Kavriaja Goswami writes: "krishna lila bhagavate kahe vedadvyasa, chaitanya lilara vyasa—vrindavana dasa." Vedavyasa has described the pastimes of Krishna in his Bhagavata. The Vyasa of Chaitanya Lila is Vrindavan Dasa." From this comparison between Vedavyasa and Vrindavana Dasa, it has been concluded that Kaviraja Goswami is probably responsible for Vrindavan Dasa Thakur's work becoming known as the Bhagavata of Chaitanya Lila, or Chaitanya-Bhagavata.

There are many pastimes of Shri Chaitanya that have only been touched on briefly by Vrindvana Dasa Thakura. These are described in detail in the Chaitanya Mangala of Lochana Dasa Thakura.

The Chaitanya Mangala is divided into four parts: Sutra Khanda, Adi Khanda, Madhyama Khanda and Shesha Khanda. The Sutra Khanda has two chapters, Adi Khanda has seven chapters, the Madhyama Khanda twelve, and the Shesha Khanda three. The contents of the Adi Khanda are as follows.

The first chapter in the Sutra Khanda is called Mangalaracharanam, or auspicious invocation. It begins with a song of the glories of Shri Chaitanya and then praises the Vaishnavas who were personal associates of Shri Chaitanya. After this, Lochan Dasa Thakura offers respects to his gurudeva, Narahari Sarakara Thakura, and prays for his guru's mercy. He offers his obeisances at the lotus feet of the countless devotees and personal associates of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, known and unknown. Having prayed for the blessings of guru and vaishnavas, Lochan dasa explains that Murari Gupta had written a book in Sanskrit called the Chaitanya Charitamritam, and that since that book is no longer available, he is giving its essence in the form of Bengali verse called Panchali. He then briefly describes the subjects found in the Adi, Madhya, and Shesha Khandas.

The second chapter of the Sutra Khanda is called Grantharambha, for here the book actually begins. In this chapter Lochan Dasa relates how he heard from Damodara Pandita the story of Jaimini's Mahabharata recital, wherein he describes

a conversation between Narada and Uddhava. In that conversation Narada explained the cause of Krishna's appearance in the golden form of Shri Gauranga.

One time Narada saw that with the coming of the age of Kali the living beings had fallen into great suffering. He began to worry about how they could be delivered and the principles of dharma restored. Thinking in this way, he decided that only Krishna's descent into this world would deliver the fallen souls and restore the principles of religion. Wanting to appeal to Krishna to descend as an avatara, he set out for Dwaraka dham. At that time, Krishna was staying in the palace of Shri Rukmini devi.

Just then, upon learning that Shri Krishna would soon appear on earth in a golden form, with the golden luster and devotional mood of Radharani, Rukminidevi became deeply troubled. Feeling separation from the Lord, she fell at the lotus feet of Krishna and began praising the qualities of Shri Radha—whose devotion was so glorious that Krishna wanted to honor her by assuming her luster and mood. At that time Narada entered the room. He explained to Krishna the reason for his trip—that he wanted Krishna to descend to the earth planet in order to deliver the fallen souls. At that time, Krishna revealed to him how in the future he would appear as the son of Sachidevi and Jagannatha Mishra in Nabadwipa dham: in a golden form with all his transcendental associates.

Having seen that golden form revealed, Narada was overwhelmed with ecstasy. Constantly thinking of this golden form and the Lord's plans to appear in Navadwipa dhama as Shri Gauranga, Narada the best of munis went to visit Naimisharanya, all the while singing the glories of the Lord. There, in answer to Uddhava's inquiries about the welfare of the living beings, he explained how in Kali-yuga—the best of all ages because of Shri Gauranga's advent—Krishna would appear in a golden form as Shri Gauranga and perform the kirtan of the holy name of Hari. Narada told Uddhava how the Lord would come to establish the Sankirtana of the holy name of Krishna as the yuga-dharma, the religious principle for the age of Kali. Narada explained the glories of kirtana.

Thereafter, Narada Muni related to Uddhava the discussion that had previously taken place when he had gone to Kailasa and visited Lord Shiva, the best of Vaishnavas. There, Narada and Parvati discussed the glories of Mahaprasada, having heard of the glroies of Mahaprasada from Narada, Parvati had performed 12 years of Lakshmi-seva. By her mercy, Parvait got some of Laksmidevi's own mahaprasada. and also gave shiva a small bit of that prasada. Not able to tolerate the dancing of Lord Shiva upon obtaining this Mahaprasada, the earth came before

Parvati, begging her to give the Mahaprasada of the Vaishanvas to all the jivas. With this proposal, Parvati explained how the Gaura-avatara would come in kaliyuga and distribute Mahaprasada to all the fallen souls.

After this, Narada went to Brahma and discussed the Gaura-avatara with him. Brahma, the creator, at that time explained to him the essential subject of the Shrimad Bhagavatam, and showed him how the version of the Bhagavatam supported the gaura-avatara. After this, Narada began wandering here and there. As he went form place to place he became concerned about he sufferings of the jivas. As he was worrying about the living entities in this way, he came near Jagannatha Puri. There he heard a divine voice disccussing the avatara of Jagannatha. On the order of the divine voice he went to Puri. From there, the Lord ordered him to go to Goloka. First he came to Vaikuntha. After this, he arrived in Goloka, where he saw many pastimes of the Lord. There he saw the Lord in his golden form as Shri Gaura, and fainted in ecstasy. After this, he went all over the universe, informing all the gods of the news.

In Shwetadwipa he saw the supernatural pastimes of Balarama, the very figure of service. After this, all the demigods began taking birth on earth. As previously mentioned by Krishna in his conversation with Rukmini, the Lord, along with Satyabhama, Rukmini, and all his eternal associates from the spiritual world came with the luster and mood of Radharani in a golden form as Shri Gauranga. He came to spead the sankirtan of the holy name of Krishna. Balarama came as Nityananda, Shiva came as Advaita Prabhu, and other great souls descended as his other eternal associates like Murari, Mukunda, Shrivasa, Raya Ramananda, Ishvara Puri, and Madhavendra Puri. Lochan Dasa Thakur concludes the chapter by praising the glories of his guru, Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura, and his nephew Raghunandana Thakura.

The first chapter of the Adi lila of Chaitanya Mangala describes the Janma-lila, or birth pastimes, of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The chapter first describes the advent of the Lord's eternal associates, who appeared in this world before Mahaprabhu Himself. Lochan Thakura describes the Lord as the remote and immediate cause of creation, the Parabrahman, Shri Narayana Himself. That Supreme Personality of Godhead descended within the womb of Sachidevi and advented Himself upon this earth. In this way, gradually Sachi's womb grew day by day, and her body assumed a supernatural effulgence. Seeing her wonderful bodily effulgence, everyone was astonished, and thought, "Surely a great personality is about to take birth from the womb of Shri Sachidevi." When her "pregnancy" was in

its sixth month, one day Advaita Acharya Prabhu went to the house of Sachidevi and Jagannatha Mishra. Arriving there, he offered his obeisances to the child in the womb of Mother Sachi and then circumambulated her. Shacidevi and Jagannatha Mishra could not understand the cause of Advaita's unusal behavior. In this way, Brahma, Shiva, and the other gods came to offer their respects to that Supreme Personality of Godhead who had hidden himself within the womb of Sachidevi, knowing well that he would soon advent Himself in this world to deliver the lowest of men with the highest nectar of Krishna prema. Detecting their presence, Sachidevi felt great joy. When the heart of Sachidevi was full of mercy for the whole world, that is to say, when the most merciful Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had completely filled her heart, gradually the tenth month came. After this, taking advantage of an auspicious moment on the full moon day in the month of Phalguna, in the midst of Hari-sankirtana, Shri Guarachandra appeared like a golden moon from the ocean of the womb of Mother Sachi. In this way, the Lord appeared on earth, and the ten directions were jubilant. The gods and godesses, men and women, eager to see the moonlike face of the son of Sachi, hurried to the house of Jagannatha Mishra and Sachidevi. In this way, their home was transformed into Vaikuntha.

Jagannatha Mishra and all the residents of Nadiya who had turned out to see that divine child were all struck with wonder to see his beauty. He had a neck like a lion, arms like the trunks of elephants, and a broad chest. His lotus feet were marked with the auspicious symbols of Lord Vishnu: a flag, a thunderbolt, a rod for driving elephants. Seeing all these wonderful and superhuman manifestations of divinity in the child, the people there were all astonished. Everyone speculated about his supernatural origin, saying, "He is definitely not an ordinary human." For eight days, the newborn child and its mother were quarantined, as is traditional for childbirth in Bengal, and on the ninth day a great festival was held. At that time, all the neighbors were filled with great joy to see the boy, and their attraction for him increased.

The second chapter of the Adi Khanda describes the Lord's bala-lila childhood pastimes. Here, Lochan das Thakura describes how after six months, the grain-eating ceremony of Shri Gaurasundara was held, and after this the name-giving ceremony was performed. At the appearance of the Lord, the whole world was delighted. Since the Lord gave pleasure to the whole world, the brahmanas said his name should be Vishvambhara. Soon, Vishvambara began to walk, by holding onto Jagannatha Mishra's finger with his tiny hand. The different women in the village

used to decorate him with different ornaments, and they would wonder at the beautiful effulgence that emanated from the child, which was as bright as millions of moons.The moon outside can brighten the darkness of night only slightly, but the moon of Shri Gaurachandra can eliminate all darkness, both within and without.

Shachidevi would sing to her son while threshing wheat, and at that time, all the demigods and offer prayers to her son. Seeing this, Sachidevi wa quite amazed. Sometimes she would see Gaurahari chanting the glories of Radha-Krishan with the gods and would become astonished and faint. When she heard ankle-bells ringing on the bare feet of her child, again she was bewildered. Sometimes she was afraid that ghosts were causing a disturbance, and sometimes she would look in the mouth of her child, and, beholding the universal form, become completely astonished.

In this way, gradually Gaurahari grew old enough to play outside, where he astounded his newfound childhood friends with his divine antics. His playmates were quite attached to him. Sachidevi would carry the baby Gaurahari in her arms and watch after him carefully as he ran about, to keep him from smashing everything as he played. Once, he explained to Mother Sachi the nature of things pure and impure, instructing her on the aprakrita nature of Krishna, who is master of everything. While sitting on a heap of broken clay pots soiled with leftovers, he instructed his mother on jnana. Seeing his mother bewildered, he brought her some coconut fruit. In this way, he performed many childhood pranks. He used to play with puppydogs. When Sachidevi chastised him for playing with a dog, and Gaurahari had to give up his pet, he cried tears of anger before Sachidevi. At that time, he bestowed a divine spiritual body upon that dog while performing Harikirtana. The dog went to Vaikuntha, and as Brahma, Shiva, and the other demigods saw the good fortune of the dog they were all amazed. Sachidevi was astonished at the activities of her son, who made her understand his Supreme Position as the Absolute Lord.

The fourth chapter of the Adi Lila of Chaitanya Mangala describes the Lord's pauganda, or boyhood lila. Having heard Murari Gupta reciting the yogashastras, the Lord mimicked his gestures and speech, making fun of him and then began to laugh uproariously. Thus Murari Gupta was enraged and chastised the Lord with words of anger. In return, the boy, intending to express his contempt for the conclusions of yogis went to Murari's afternoon lunch and urinated on Murari Gupta's plate. After this, he instructed Murari Gupta on the superiority of Krishna-bhakti. Finally, the author discusses Mahaprabhu's boyhood

performance of sankirtana, and relates what he heard from Damodara Pandit of Murari Gupta's notes on the sannyasa of Vishvarupa, the Lord's older brother. He also relates the lamentation of Sachidevi and Jagannatha upon their son's taking sannyasa. He also recounts many other pastimes performed by the Lord as a boy. At that time the Lord's hair-cutting ceremony took place. And soon thereafter, the day of Hate-khare, or the first holding of chalk, came. On that day, to signify the beginning of a child's formal education begins, he is given a piece of chalk and a chalkboard, upon which he is to draw the letters of the alphabet. Upon beginning his studies, the Lord was overjoyed to meet many new classmates. On the day that his son's education began, Jagannatha Mishra was very pleased. That night, however, he had a dream in which a brahmana appeared to him and told him that his son Vishvambhara was Bhagavan Himself. Who can educate the Supreme Lord, or discipline him as a small boy? From this, Jagannatha Mishra could understand the supreme position of his child. When his dream broke, he was again overwhelmed with the sentiments of parental love and soon forgot the dream.

At a particular time, the sacred thread ceremony of the boy was performed. After this, there is a discussion of the four ages and the yuga-avatara. In Dvapara-yuga, the Supreme Lord Himself, Shri Krishna the son of Nanda in Vrindavana, makes his appearance on earth. In Kaliyuga, Shri Krishna, appearing with the luster and mood of Shri Radha, advents himself as Shri Gauranga. By performing Sankirtana, he establishes the religious principle for the age of Kali: hari-nama-sankirtana. In order to establish the yuga-dharma, he comes as a preacher. Maddened with Krishna-prema, he delivers all souls with the ecstasy of love of God, by moving here and there and distributing divine love. While in his grihastha-lila, he ordered his mother to refrain from eating grains on Ekadashi, in this way instructed everyone to follow this injunction.

Gradually, Jagannatha Mishra fell ill, and passed away, entering into the Lord's unmanifest pastimes. At that time, the Lord instructed Sachidevi on the fleeting nature of a man's short life within the material world. He also explained many other important principles of divine reality to her. With the passing of her husband, Sachidevi greatly lamented. Gaurahari Himself also lamented the passing of his father. After this time, he began paying close attention to his studies.

Chapter four describes the Lord's pastimes of youth and marriage. One day, after school, the Lord was walking home from his teacher's house and at that time he met Vanamali Acarya. As they talked, the Acharya made the Lord understand

that he had just been to see his mother Sachidevi, where he had been making arrangements for the Lord's wedding. Sachidevi had rebuffed him, and unable to secure her permission for the match, Vanamali was a little unhappy. In this way, he was returning to his home, downcast. Shri Gaurahari returned home. Without intimating anything of his conversation with the matchmaker, the Lord informed her of his intentions to wed, saying that she should seek out Vanamali and make the necessary arrangements for the wedding of her son. She did so, and on the orders of Sachimata, Vanamali Acharya went to Vallabhacharya's house. There he informed Vallabhacarya of the Lord's intent to wed Vallabhacarya's daughter Lakshmidevi.

Having made all the arrangements for the wedding, Sachidevi informed all her friends and relatives of the auspicious event and invited them to the occasion. Everyone floated in the waves of the joyful ocean. In this way, Sachidevi made preparations for her son's wedding. All the residents of Nadia turned out to see the wedding. The relatives saw to it that all the old traditional Bengali wedding customs were followed. The Hindu ceremony of besmearing the bridegroom and bride with a paste of turmeric and then bathing them on the eve of the wedding was performed, as were many other rituals. The place where the wedding was to be performed was cleansed with sanctified water, and all the Vedic purificatory rites were observed. All this took place at the house of Vallabhacharya. At last, with great pomp and grandeur, in the midst of a great assembly of devotees, relatives and friends, the wedding of Shri Gaurahari and Lakshmidevi was performed in the house of Vallabhacarya. The Acharya himself performed the Vedic wedding ceremony. He offered his new son-in-law sanctified water and arghya to sweeten his lotus mouth. After this, he brought Lakshmidevi up on the wedding stage and presented her to Gaurahari. Finally, the scriptural sacrifice that is performed at weddings took place. After this, the brahmanas were fed sumptuous prasadam at the conclusion of the wedding, and Shri Lakshmidevi was escorted to her new home as the bride of Shri Gaurahari.

The Fifth Chapter of the Adi Khanda of Chaitanya Mangala describes more of the Lord's pastimes of youth, including his tour of Bengal. After some time the Lord journeyed down the banks of the Ganges, sanctifying that holy river even further by the touch of his lotus footsteps. In order to provide for his new family, the Lord set out for East Bengal, where he took up the occupation of teaching. In this way he gave his mercy to the residents of East Bengal who lived on the banks of the Padmavati river. When he returned to Bengal, he found that Lakshmidevi had

been unable to tolerate the pain of his absence. She was bitten by the snake of separation and passed away into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord. Sachidevi was heartbroken and was consoled in her lamentation by Gaurahari who glorified the sublime qualities of Lakshmidevi.

The Sixth Chapter of the Adi Khanda of Chaitanya Mangala describes the arrangements made by Sachidevi for the Lord's second wedding. Through Dvija-Kashishvara it was arranged that he was to be wed to the daughter of Sanatana Pandita, Vishnupriya devi. Here, the wedding of Vishnupriya and Gaurahari is elaborately described.

The seventh chapter of the Adi Khanda describes the Lord's journey to Gaya. Some time after the wedding of Gaurahari and Vishnupriyadevi, the Lord, having completed his education busied himself in his teaching work. One day, he left for Gaya to offer respects to his departed father. As he walked down the road, everywhere, the birds and animals who saw him were stunned with ecstasy upon beholding his lotus feet. After instructing a brahmana in Krishna-bhakti, the Lord allowed a brahmana to drink the water of his lotus feet. That brahmana immediately became free from all his bodily distress. At that time, the Lord also instructed how the mysteries of Krishna-bhajana cannot be understood simply on the basis of one's birth in a brahmana family. At last arriving in Gaya, the Lord performed worship of the devas and pitris, in order to do his duty regarding his departed father. While so engaged, he went to see the lotus feet of the Vishnu Deity. At that time, the Lord met that best of Vaishnavas, Shri Ishvara Puri. At that time, he prayed for the mercy of Ishvara Puri Prabhu, who, soon thereafter, initiated him in the Krishnamantra. With this, the Lord's transcendental ecstasy became manifest. After this, he went to take darshan of the lotus feet of Vishnu. Upon seeing the Lord's holy feet, Shri Gaurahari was overwhelmed with prema and exhibited his ecstasy by laughing, singing and dancing. Only a few days later, he returned home.

From this point the first chapter of the Madhya Khanda begins. Here, the author describes the Lord's pastimes as a teacher, and explains how he showed mercy to his students. Praising her good fortune, the Lord showed his grace to Sachimata. Soon after this he revealedsymptoms of mahaprema at the home of Suklambara Brahmacari. This was the first time that he publicly revealed his absorption in Krishna-prema, by showing the symptoms of great ecstasy, such as swooning, tears shooting from the eyes, hairs of the body standing on end, choking up of the voice, laughing madly, and so on. Performing sublime kirtan, Shri Gaurahari drowned

everyone in the waves of bliss. In this way the Supreme Lord appeared as his own devotee in order to glorify the position of Bhakti.

After this, the Lord began his pastimes of preaching the glories of Shri Krishna prema, engaging many devotees in preaching. He began organizing all the devotees, beginning with Gadadhara, as well as many devotees from within and wihtout Bengal. One day the Lord went to the house of Shrivasa and his brothers. At that time, the devotees could hear the flute of Krishna. At that time the Lord became overwhelmed by the mood of Shrimati Radhika. In the madness of separation, he began laughing and crying. Sometimes he would fall completely silent and his mood became grave. In thiw ay he manifest differing divine moods. At that time, a divine voice siad, "O Vishvambhara! You are the Lord Himself. For the purpose of preaching Krishna-prema, you have descended within this world."

Later, at the house of Murari Gupta, the Lord would reveal his form as the Varaha avatara. At that time, Murari offered prayers before the Lord in great ecstasy, and the Lord told him to serve Krishna the son of Nanda, following in the footsteps of the residents of Vrindvana. Murari Gupta wanted to see the form of Shri Ramachandra. At that time the Lord instructed him on the glories of the holy name of Krishna. At last, the devatas headed by Lord Brahma appeared before the Lord, praying for Krishna-prema and attained Krishna-prema by the mercy of Shri Gauranga. After this, the kirtan-performer Suklambhara Brahmachari began chanting "Jai Radhe! Jai Govinda!" and attained the mercy of Shri Chaitanya. After this, Lochan dasa Thakura describes the glories of Shri Shri Gaura-Gadadhara.

In the second chapter of the Madhya Khanda, the author describes the beauty of Shri Gauranga's divine form. The Lord performed a miracle by planting a mango seed that immediately became a mango tree with fully ripened fruit for the satisfaction of the devotees. Whoever ate the fruit of that tree was delivered from the tree of material existence. The Lord instructed Mukunda Datta on the supremacy of Krishna bhakti, and how one should give up thinking of the body and mind and think only of the worshipable service of Krishna. The Lord gave his blessings to Murari Gupta. The Lord's pastimes of kirtana at the house of Shrivasa Thakura are described. When a foolish brahman remarked that the murti of Shri Krishna is a product of Maya, the Lord jumped in the Ganges with his clothes on, to purify himelf from the offender.

The third chapter of the Madhya-Khanda describes the glories of Shri Advaita. Here, the author describes the Lord's pastimes with Advaita, how he

performed kirtan in the house of Advaita, and how they embraced in ecstasy. A brahman who tried to stop the kirtan of Mahaprabhu by attempting to frighten Shrivasa Pandita was bewildered by the Lord's mayic potency. Also described is how the Lord, in the house of Shrivasa, performed the worship known as Gada-puja, wherein the club of Vishnu is worshiped in order to invoke the Lord's power in smashing the atheists. This chapter also explains the visit paid by Advaita to Nabadwipa, how Advaita bowed before Shri Gauranga, and danced in ecstasy before him, realizing that his prayers for Krishna's descent had been fulfilled. When Shrivasa Thakura inquired into the glories of Advaita, Mahaprabhu described Advaita-tattva, and advised everyone to worship Shri Hari.

In the fourth chapter of the Madhyama Khanda, Shri Gaurahari explains the esoteric meaning of "Shrivasa." Murari Gupta's book, "Raghubhirashtaka" is discussed. The Lord writes "Ramdasa" on Murari's forehead. He reveals himself as Rama and orders Rama Pandita, the brother of Shrivasa Pandita to serve Shrivasa. The devotees are sent to search for Nityananda. The Lord meets Nityananda at the house of Nandana Acharya. The Lord explains the glories of Shri Nityananda and how it is that by Nityananda's mercy one may attain Krishna-prema. At that time, the Lord reveals his six-armed, four-armed, and two-armed forms to Nityananda.

The fifth chapter of the Madhya-Khanda reveals how, late at night, the Lord was weeping tears of ecstatic love for Krishna. He discussed his dream with Sachidevi. The story of how Nityananda Prabhu spent two days at the house of Advaita Acharya is recounted. Nityananda Prabhu's prema is described. The worship by Advaita of Mahaprabhu in the house of Shrivasa Pandita is described. The meeting of the Lord and Haridasa Thakura. The author also tells how Nityananda's kaupin was saved by Mahaprabhu, who later had the devotees wear it as a kavacha. Mahaprabhu's trance and the devotees' separation from the Lord is also described. The ecstasy of the devotees upon the Lord's reawakening is also described.

The sixth chapter of the Madhya-Khanda discusses the following subjects: How Gaurahari enjoyed pastimes of prema in the midst of the devotees; his meeting with Haridasa Thakura; His visit at the house of Advaita; his order to Advaita to preach Krishna-prema without any consideration of fitness and unfitness; His order to all the devotees to preach nama-prema and thus deliver everyone; the effects of nama-bhasa; How the Lord would wander through the streets of Nadiya performing Nama-kirtana; the story of the deliverance of Jagai and Madhai. After this, the author glorifies the mercy of Shri Nityananda and Shri Gauranga.

The seventh chapter of the Madhyama-Khanda describes the following subjects: How the Lord cast his merciful glance upon the son of an East Bengal brahmana named Vanamali; the brahmana, and, seeing the Shyamansundra form of the Lord, he offered many prayers to Shri Gauranga. After this, the Lord revealed his Nrishimha manifestation at the house of Shrivasa. He bestowed mercy upon a follower of Shiva. After a brahman lady touched his feet, he jumped into the Ganges. The Lord gave instructions regarding the worship of Shri Hari. His mercy towards Shrivasa is described as are Mukunda's prayers, the Lord's manifestation of His Godhood, and Shrivas Pandit's abhishek of Mahaprabhu. The author's glorification of the qualities of Shri Gauranga and his instructions on the worship of Shri Gauranga conclude the chapter.

The eighth chapter of the Madhyama Khanda describes the following subjects: How the envious brahmana who was stricken with leprosy prayed for forgiveness in order to become freed from the sin of Vaishnava aparadha and was delivered by the mercy of Shrivasa Thakura; how a brahmana was forbidden to enter the Lord's nocturnal kirtan and how the Lord danced in ecstasy when that brahmana then cursed the Lord never to enjoy the pleasures of samsara. How the Lord in the mood of Balarama demanded honey is described. The assembly of devotees at the house of Advaita is described. The visit of the devotees headed by Acharyaratna is recorded. How all of them saw the Lord's manifestation of Balarama and bathed in the Ganges is also described.

The ninth chapter of the Madhyama Khanda of Shri Chaitanya Mangala records the following subjects: the Lord's manifestation of Varaha; How the devotees headed by Advaita were ordered to preach and perform sankirtana; how the mood and qualities of the gopis was glorified in kirtan; how Shrivasa in the dress of Narada glorified Gadadhara Pandita; a discussion of the divine correlation between Shri Gadadhara and Shri Radhika; Thakur Haridas's visit; the ecstasy of Sankirtana; the Lord's mad manifestation of the mood of Vaikuntha opulence; How the Lord, in the dress of Lakshmidevi rendered service to the Lord in great ecstasy; How the Lord expressed the inner moods of the personality of Godhead.

The Tenth Chapter of the Madhyama-Khanda of Chaitanya Mangala describes the following: The Lord tells Shrivasa of the different religious principles for the different ages and how Sankirtan is the best religious principle in the age of Kali. In the mood of Shri Radha the Lord began asking "Where is Vrindavan? Where is Lalita?" in great anxiety. Murari Gupta consoled him, and they all performed kirtana. In a dream Sachidevi sees Gaurahari receive the sannyasa

mantra from Keshava Bharati. The Lord's powerful separation from Krishna is described. Worried that the Lord will take sannyasa, the devotees are heartbroken. Mahaprabhu consoles the devotees.

The Eleventh Chapter of Madhyama Khanda describes the following: Upon hearing of the Lord's sannyasa, Sachidevi's lamentation; Her entreaty to Gaurahari to remain a grihastha; The Lord's advice to everyone to worship Krishna; His different attempts to console his mother and his revevlation of the divine form of Krishna to her.

The twelfth chaper of the madhyama khanda discusses the following subjects: The lamentation of Vishnupriyadevi; the Lord's sweet words of pacification to her and his instructions regarding divine reality, as well as his revelation of of his four-handed Narayana form; the visit by Shrivasa and Murari, the Lord's attempt to pacify them.

The thirteenth chapter describes the following: The Lord's attemtp to console the devotees, and his instructions on different truths; with the aim to take sannyasa, he swims across the Ganges and meets Keshava Bharati at Katwa; Sachimata and Vishnupriya faint; Nityananda Prabhu tries to pacify them; Headed by Chandrashekhara Acharya and Damodara Pandit, all the devotees follow Nityananda Prabhu to Katwa where the sannyasa is taking place. The Lord asks for the sannyasa mantra from Keshava Bharati; The Lord first gives the sannyasa mantra to Bharati and then hears it from him; the lamentation of all the devotees at the sannyasa of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu; The Lord's attempt to pacify them; the Lord's eagerness for Krishna-bhakti; the giving of the name Shri Krishna Chaitanya; At the conclusion of sannyasa the Lord's wandering half-mad in the Radadesha.

The fourteenth chapter describes how Chandrashekara returns from Katwa to Nadia bearing news to Sachimata and Vishnupriya; their lamentation; Nityananda Prabhu causes Mahaprabhu to detour to Shantipura; the Lord's vist there; Nityananda's conversation with Sachidevi; the devotees of Nadiya go to the house of Advaita in Shantipur to see the Lord; the Lord's reciprocation of affection with the residents of Nadiya, and their separation.

The fifteenth chapter describes the Lord's deliverance of all souls through the performance of nam-sankirtan, and how he bestowed upon all the jivas the supreme goal of life. After this his journey to Jagannatha Puri is described as well as the humility of Haridasa Thakura, the exodus of devotees who went to Puri to be with the Lord, His sweet words of consolation, how the Lord used to chant the

shloka, "rama-raghava raksha mam," on his way to Puri, how Nityananda Prabhu broke his sannyasa danda, and how the Lord manifest his pastimes of anger with Nityananda after the breaking of his danda.

The sixteenth chapter of the Madhyama Khanda describes how on the way to Jagannatha Puri, the devotees bathed in a place called Brahma-kunda; how they went to Remuna and had dashan on the Lord there; how the Lord danced before the Gopal deity; how after bathing in the Vaitarani river they had darshan of Varaha-deva; how the Lord went to Yajapura; How the Lord took darshan of a Shiva-linga there; Then, from Brahma-kunda, he 'visited Nabhigaya and Shivanagara; how he received the darshan of Kshirodakshayi Vishnu; how in a grove of mangos he took up the question of Shiva Prasada and prayers to Shiva; after this, how he went from Kapoteshwara and bathed in the Bhargavi river; How the Lord fainted before the Jagannatha deities while having darshan there; his visit to the house of Sarvabhauma; How the Lord would go from the house of Sarvabhauma, take a position west of the Garuda Stambha, and see the deity of Lord Jagannatha; how Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and the Lord discussed Vedanta; How Sarvabhauma was converted; How the Lord revealed his six-armed form to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya.

From here, the Shesha Khanda begins. The first chapter of the Shesha Khanda describes: the Lord's kirtan pastimes in which Sarvabhauma took part; the Lord's tour of South India and his journey to Setubandha; his mercy on Vasudeva Vipra, the brahmana who had leprosy; the Lord's visit to Jiyada-Nrishimha and its ancient history; the Lord's meeting with Ramananda Raya on the banks of the Godavari; Ramananda's vision of Mahaprabhu's dual feature as Rasaraja and Mahabhava; the Lord's visit to Panchavati and Shri Rangam; How he bestowed mercy on Trimalla Bhatta; His four month stay in Shri Rangam during the period of Chatur Masya; his meeting with Paramananda Puri; the prayers by Paramananda Puri to Gaura Bhagvan.

The second chapter of the Shesh Khanda describes the following: How the Lord continued on his South Indian tour and delivered the seven trees that had been standing since the time of Lord Ram; How at Setubandha in great ecstasy, the Lord chanted the names of Rama, Lakshman, Sita, and Hanuman; how the Lord returned to Alalanatha by way of the Godavari; his return to Jagannatha Puri; His visit to Mathura; His meeting with Rupa and Sanatana; How with Balabhadra Bhattacharya, he wandered down the banks of the Yamuna and through the twelve forests of Vrindavana.

The third and final chapter of the Shesh Khanda of Chaitanya Mangala records how: the Lord returned to Jagannatha Puri; the Lord's trip to Gauda-desha; how he passed through in the Rada-desha; how he stopped in Kuliya; How everyone in Navadwip turned out to see the Lord; How they prayed for His mercy and he bestowed amnesty on all; How, to satisfy his mother's desire, he went to Nabadwipa and instructed her on of Krishna-bhajan; How the Lord went to Shantipura where he visited Shri Advaita; His kirtan there; How the Lord left Shantipura; His return to Jagannatha Puri; How he visited the deity of Jagannatha; how he performed kirtana day and night; How King Prataparudra attained the Lord's mercy; His revelation of the six-armed form to Prataparudra Raja; The Dravidian brahmana who come to visit the Lord, how he was fasting for seven days, and how he was delivered by the Lord's mercy.

In the Chaitanya Mangala, Lochan Dasa Thakura mentions the details of certain pastimes not revealed by Vrindvana Dasa Thakura. For example, Vrindavana Dasa Thakura does not record the conversation that took place between Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Vishnupriya Devi just before the Lord left to take sannyasa. But Lochan Das Thakura describes this as follows:

"Seeing Mahaprabhu's eagerness to take sannyasa, the moon-faced Vishnupirya-devi said, with her voice choked in emotion, " Tell me, O Prananatha, Lord of my life, and I shall take your order upon my head. Will you take sannyasa? I have heard this rumor being circulated among the people in general. Hearing this, my heart is broken. If it is true, I shall enter into fire. You are the treasure of my life. Your beautiful form is always everfresh and newly youthful. Will you give up everything and go away? If am deprived of your association, I might as well give up my life by drinking poison."

Hearing the pitiful words of lamentation spoken by Vishnupriya devi, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu smiled a little, and spoke as follows: "Listen, O you who are dear as life itself: Please don't be in any anxiety. There is no need to worry at all. What I am about to say is for your own benefit. Please hear me attentively, with your whole mind. Whatever you see in this world is all false; the only truth is Bhagavan and theVaishnavas, without that whatever you see is all illusion. Know this for a fact. Sons, wives, husbands, ladies, fathers, mothers, and everything else—all these relationships are illusory. They are temporary and transitional. In one lifetime we have one set of sons, wives, husbands, mothers and fathers, and in our next life this changes. Other than the lotus feet of Krishna, we have no real family. Everything else that we see as our family is an illusion of maya. What we

see as man and woman is unreal. Beneath the surface all souls are spiritual energy; the relationship between men and women is an illusory connection of maya. Shri Krishna is the real husband of everyone; he is the master. Everything else is material, but unfortunately this is not understood by the people in general. The souls is embedded in a mixture of semen and blood from which it is born into a body composed of stool and urine. In this way the soul moves upon this earth in ignorance. From boyhood to youth to old age, we suffer different miseries, all the while mistaking the housing of this body as our real self. Absorbed in false ego, we make friends, maintain attachments, suffering abuse, and are gradually cheated by old age. Even hearing the truth, however, still our eyes are blind, and while our suffering in the material world brings us to tears, we never worship Govinda.

Fosaking Krishna's service, we maintain these bodies in the material world of birth and death, trapped in the bondage of maya. Mad with false ego we have forgotten our Lord, and so we insure our passage to hell. Your name is Vishnupriya, however. Fulfill the real purport of Vishnupriya, and do not lament for what is false. Remembering what I have said here, cast your worries at a distance, and always think of Krishna within your heart, day and night."

Having conveyed all these divine instructions to Vishnupriya devi, the Supreme Lord, Shri Gaurasundara revealed to her His four-armed form, thus making her understand his absolute position. At that time, he told Vishnupriya devi, "You see before you the Supreme Lord, cast your mayik lamentaion away." At this, Vishnupriya devi became joyful within. Her grief and pain vanished, and her heart became blissful upon suddenly seeing the Lord's four-armed form.

After hearing the instructions of the Lord and seeing his absolute form, Vishnupriya cast off her bewilderment, but her mentality of taking the Lord as her husband was intact. At that point, she fell at the feet of the Lord and said: "O Lord, please listen to my entreaty. Falling at your feet again and again, I implore you to accept my humble submission. I am certainly the lowest, having taken birth in this world of samsara; but you are my most dear Lord of life. This is my only wealth; without you I have nothing. Without your service, I will certainly go down." Saying this, Vishnupriya devi began loudly weeping, sobbing and sobbing again and again in ever-increasing frenzy of sorrow. Seeing the affliction of someone so dear, the Lord bestowed his merciful glance upon Vishnupriya devi, embracing her with his eyes and so giving her his mercy.

At that time, the Lord said, "Listen O Vishnupriya devi, and give close attention to my answer to your words. I shall go there and there, but wherever I go, I

shall still remain at your place: This truth I have spoken with great determination."

Upon hearing the order of the Lord, Vishnupriya devi could understand that the Lord is supremely independent. At that time she said, "You must do what makes you happy. Let no one be an obstacle to your divine mission."

Addressing the Lord in this way, Vishnupriya tearfully averted her eyes from the Lord's glance and fell silent. Thus went the conversation between the Lord and Vishnupriya, which is painful to hear. This is reported by Lochan Dasa. Lochan Dasa Thakura also sings the glories of Shri Gauranga and Nityananda in the following beautiful song:

parama karuna pahun dui jana
nitai gaurachandra
saba avatara, sara shiromani
kevala ananda kanda
bhaja bhaja bhai, chaitanya nitai
sudhrida visvasa kori
vishaya chariya se rase majiya
mukha bolo hari hari
dekho ore bhai, tribhuvane nai
emona doyala data
pashu-pakhi jhure, pashana vidore
shuni yar guna gantha
samsare majiya, rahile pariya
se pade nahilo asha
apana koroma, bhunjaye shamana,
kohoye locana dasa

This song was especially dear to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who translates it is follows:

"This is a song by Locan dasa Thakura. Locan dasa declares that the two Lords, Nitai-Gauracandra—Lord Nitai and Lord Chaitanya—are very merciful. They are the essence of all incarnations. The specific significance of these incarnations is that prosecuting their way of self-realization is simply joyful, for they introduced chanting and dancing. There are many incarnations, like Lord Rama and even Krishna, who taught Bahgavad-gita, which requires knowledge and understanding. But Lord Chaitanya introduced a process which is simply joyful—simply chant and dance. Therefore Lochan Das requests everyone: "My dear brother, I request that you

just worship Lord Chaitanya and Nityananda with firm conviction and faith." Don't think that this chanting and dancing will not lead to the desired goal. It will. It is the assurance of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu that one will get all perfection by this process. Therefore one must chant with firm faith and conviction.

But what is the process? If one wants to be Krishna conscious by this process, one has to give up his engagement in sense gratification. That is the only restriction. If one gives up sense gratification, it is sure that he will reach the desired goal. One simply has to chant "Hari Hari!" without any motive of sense gratification.

Lochan das says, "My dear brother, you just try and examine this. Within the three worlds there is no one like Lord Chaitanya or Lord Nityananda, because Their merciful qualities are so great that They make even birds and beasts cry, what to speak of human beings." Actually, when Lord Chaitanya passed through the forest known as Jharikhanda, the tigers, elephants, snakes, deer, and all other animals joined Him in chanting Hare Krishna. It is so nice that anyone can join. Even teh animals can join, what to speak of human beings. Of course, it is not possible for ordinary men to induce animals to chant, but if Chaitanya Mahaprabhu could inspire animals to chant, at least we can encourage human beings to adopt this path of Hare Krishna mantra chanting. It is so nice that even the most stonehearted man will be melted. It is so nice that even stone will melt.

But Lochan dasa Thakura regrets that he is entrapped by sense gratification. He addresses himself, "My dear mind, you are entrapped in this sense gratification process, and you have no attraction for chanting Hare Krishna. Since you have no attraction for the lotus feet of Lord Chaitanya and Lord Nityananda, what can I say? I can simply think of my misfortune. Yamaraja, the superintendent of death, is punishing me by not allowing me to be attracted by this movement."

Shri Lochan Dasa Thakura was born in Shakabda 1445 and disappeared in 1540.

Lokanatha Goswami

Lokanatha Goswami is mentioned as follows in the Chaitanya Charitamrita: *sange gopala-bhatta, dasa-raghunatha, raghunatha bhatta-gosai, ara lokanatha:* When Rupa Goswami stayed at Mathura, he was accompanied by Gopala Bhatta Goswami, Raghunatha dasa Goswami, Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami and Lokanatha dasa Goswami. Shri Bhaktivedanta Swami gives the following information about Shri Lokanatha Goswami: "Shri Lokanatha Goswami was a personal associate of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and a great devotee of the Lord. He was a resident of a village named Talakhadi in the district of Yashohara in Bengal. Previously he lived in Kachnapara. His father's name was Padmanabha, and his only younger brother was Pragalbha. Following the orders of Shri Chaitanya mahaprabhu, shri Lokanatha went to Vrindavana to live. He established a temple named Gokulananda. Shrila Narottama Das Thakura selected Lokanatha das Goswami to be his spirtual master, and he was his only disciple. Because Lokanatha dasa Goswami did not want his name mentioned in Chaitanya Charitamrita, we do not often see it in that celebrated book. On the E.B.R. Railroad, the Yashohara station is located in Bangladesh. From the railway station one has to go by bus to the village of Sonakhali and from there to Khejura. From there one has to walk, or, during the rainy sedason, go by boat to the village of Talakhadi. In this village there are still descendants of Lokanatha Goswami [i.e., descendants of his brother, see below.]."

A *pranam mantra* for Lokanatha Goswami has been written by Narottama Dasa Thakura. It reads:

srimad-radha-vinodaika-
seva-sampat-samanvitam
padmanabhatmajam shrimal-
lokanatha prabhum bhaje

"I worship the lotus feet of Shrila Lokanatha Prabhu, the son of Shri Padmanabha. He is a storehouse of singleminded service to the lotus feet of Shri Shri Radha-Vinoda."

In the village of Talakhori Gram in the Yashohara district, lived the mother and father of Shri Lokanatha Goswami. His father's name was Padmanabha and his mother's name was Shri Sitadevi. Shri Padmanabha Bhattacharya was a very

dear follower of Shri Advaita Acharya. One day, Shri Lokanatha Goswami took his birth in the house of Shri Padmanabha and Shri Sita Devi. His younger brother's name was Shri Pragalabha Bhattacharya. The descendents of Pragalabha still live in Talakhori Gram.

From his early childhood, Shri Lokanatha was indifferent to family life. One day, giving up his mother and father, and leaving his home behind forever, he went to Mayapura in Nabadwipa to take darshan of the holy feet of Shri Gauranga. Shri Gaurangadeva embraced Lokanatha Goswami with great affection, and soon he ordered Lokanatha Goswami to quickly go to Vrindavana. But Lokanatha Goswami could understand by certain evidence that Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would leave home and take sannyasa within two or three days. Therefore, he was in great anxiety.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu could understand the mind and heart of Lokanatha Goswami and consoled him, saying, "We shall be reunited in Vrindavana."

In this connection, Shrila Narahari Chakravarti has written in his Bhakti-Ratnakara: "While he was weeping and weeping, crying out his heart at the lotus feet of Shri Chaitanya, Lokanatha felt himself being caught up and embraced by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Later, as Lokanatha bid him farewell, the Lord gave him a confidential message which consoled him greatly. After this, he offered his soul at the lotus feet of Shriman Mahaprabhu, and after giving his pranamas to the all the devotees, he went on his way."

After this, Lokanatha never returned to home life. Rather, afflicted with deep separation from Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, he began wandering from one holy place of pilgrimage to the next. Gradually, after visiting many holy places, he came to Vrindavana Dham.

In the meantime, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa and went to Jagannatha Puri. After staying in Puri for some time, the Lord had a mind to deliver the fallen souls, and so began his tour of South India. Hearing of the Lord's tour of South India, Shri Lokanatha also went to South India, in search of the Lord.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, after visiting many holy places of pilgrimage in South India and again returning to Jagannatha Puri for some time, finally came to Vrindavana. Hearing of this, Lokanatha Goswami quickly went to Vrindavan. Meanwhile, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had already left for Prayaga-dham. Arriving in Vrindavana and not seeing Mahaprabhu, Lokanatha was heartbroken. He resolved to set everything right by starting out the very next morning for Prayaga,

to meet the Lord. That night the Lord came to him in a dream and consoled him, saying, "O Lokanatha, stay in Vrindvana. I have not broken my vow. I have already come to Vrindavana and live there in another form. In this way you shall always maintain my connection."

A few days later, Shrila Lokanatha Goswami chanced to meet the most dear followers of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: Shri Rupa, Shri Sanatana, Shri Gopala Bhatta, Shri Bhugarbha and others. The exchange of divine love between them was wonderful to behold! They were all of one mind, one heart. In the midst of the Goswamis, Shri Lokanatha was the oldest. He was fully absorbed in prema. In his mangalaracana to the Hari-bhakti-vilasa, Shri Sanatana Goswami offers his respects to Lokanatha Goswami as follows:

vrindavan priyan vande shri govinda padashritan
shrimad-kashishvaram lokanatam shri krishnadasakam

"I offer my obeisances unto Shri Kashishvara Pandit, Shri Lokanatha Goswami and Shri Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami who are very dear to Shri Govinda in Vrindavan, having taken shelter at his lotus feet."

Shri Lokanatha Goswami wandered throughout all twelve forests of Vrindavan in great ecstasy. In one of the forests there is a village named Umarao. There he stayed for some time on the banks of Kishori-kunda. He had a great desire to establish the worship of the deity and render service to Krishna in that way. Understanding Lokanath's aspiration to serve, Krishna Himself appeared before him and offered Lokanatha a vigraha, saying, "Worship this Deity here. This deity's name is Radha-vinoda. After giving him this beautiful deity, the Lord suddenly disappeared.

At this, Lokanatha Goswami became stricken with anxiety. Seeing him absorbed in worry, Radhavinoda smiled and said, "Why have you brought me here? I have come here personally just to satisfy your purpose. What do you want from me? I live in the forest here, near the village of Umarao. By this Kishori kunda you see before you, I make my residence. You must now give me something to eat. Quickly."

Lokanatha Goswami's joy knew no bounds. He floated in the waves of prema. After this he prepared an offering for the Lord to eat. After offering fine rice ona fresh banana leaf to the deity he experienced great ecstasy by offering his life at the lotus feet of the Lord. He was stunned by drinking in the nectarine beauty of the Lord. After this he offered a bed of flowers and made the Lord rest.

Shri Lokanatha Goswami made this place his home. The local villagers and cowherd men wanted to construct a bhajan kutir for him, but he refused to accept it.

In order to protect the deity, he prepared a cloth bag which he would keep around his neck at all times. Shri Radhavinoda became like a jeweled necklace around the neck of Lokanatha Goswami. The cloth bag was his temple. This was Lokanatha Goswami's practice until the day he disappeared from this earth, and is an example of the strict vairagya he maintained. With great care he always stayed in the association of the Goswamis of Vrindavana.

It is very difficult to exhaustively describe the life and pastimes of Lokanatha Goswami who was very dear to Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. When Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his dear followers beginning with Shri Rupa and Shri Sanatana disappeared, Shrila Lokanatha Goswami could not tolerate the separation. After this his only purpose in life was to establish the wishes of Shri Chaitanya Mahprabhu.

Shrila Lokanatha Goswami gave mantra diksha to Shri Narottama Dasa Thakura. There is no mention in the shastras that he accepted any other disciples. Narottam Thakura served him in secret by going in the dead of night to the place where Lokanatha would pass stool and urine and cleansing the area very carefully. Seeing Narottama's humility, Lokanatha accepted him.

Shrila Lokanatha Goswami, in his ripe old age, while performing his bhajan in Khadiravan in Khayara Gram, passed away and entered into the eternal unmanifest pastimes of the Lord. At that place is a kunda called Shri Yugala Kunda. On the banks of that kunda, Shrila Lokanatha Goswami entered into samadhi.

It is said that when Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami went to Lokanatha Goswami and asked his blessings to compile the Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Lokanatha Goswami gave his blessings, but prohibited Kaviraja Goswami from mentioning his name in the Chaitanya Charitamrita. For fear of violating the order of Lokanatha, Kaviraj Goswami has only briefly mentioned him in the Chaitanya Charitamrita. On the day of Krishnastami in the month of Shravana, he entered into the eternal pastimes of the Lord.

Shrila Narottama Dasa Thakura Mahashaya prays as follows at the lotus feet of his gurudeva:

ha ha prabhu lokanatha, rakha padadvandve
kripadrishthye chaha yadi haiya anande
manovancha siddhi habe hang purna trishna
hethaya chaitanya mile setha radhakrishna
tumi na karile daya ke kairbe ara

manera vasana purna kara eibara
ei tini samsare mora ara keho nai
kripa kari nija padatale deha thai
radhakrishna lilaguna gao ratri dine
narottama vancha purna nahe tuwa vine

"O Lokanatha, O gurudeva! If you are pleased with me, please keep me in the shelter of your lotus feet, and cast your merciful glance upon me. by your mercy I can find the perfection of inner fulfillment. And by your mercy I can someday meet Shri Chaitanya and Radha-Krishna. If you are not merciful to me, then what shall I do? Please, just once, fulfill my heart's desire. In the three worlds of birth and death no one is more in need of your mercy. Please give me your mercy and give me a place at your lotus feet. Day and night I sing the qualities and pastimes of Radha and Krishna. Still, the inner aspirations of Narottama for the service of Shri Shri Radha-Govinda and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu can only be realized through your grace, O Lokanatha Goswami Prabhu."

Lives of the Saints
Mahesh Pandit

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī has written: "Maheśa Paṇḍita, the seventh of the twelve *gopālas*, was very liberal. In great love of Kṛṣṇa he danced to the beating of a kettledrum like a madman."

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī writes, "The village of Maheśa Paṇḍita, which is known as Pālapāḍā, is situated in the district of Nadia within a forest about one mile south of the Cākadaha railway station. The Ganges flows nearby. It is said that formerly Maheśa Paṇḍita lived on the eastern side of Jirāṭa in the village known as Masipura or Yaśipura, and when Masipura merged in the riverbed of the Ganges, the Deities there were brought fto Pālapāḍā, which is situated in the midst of various villages such as Beleḍāṅgā, Berigrāma, Sukhasāgara, Cānduḍe and Manasāpotā. (There are about fourteen villages, and the entire neghborhood is known as Pāñcanagara Paragaṇa.) It is mentioned that Maheśa Paṇḍita joined the festival performed by Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu at Pānihāṭi. Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura also joined in the festival, and Maheśa Paṇḍita saw him on that occasion. In the temple of Maheśa Paṇḍita there are Deities of Gaura-Nityānanda, Śrī Gopīnātha, Śrī Madana-Mohana and Rādhā-Govinda as well as a *śalagrāma-śila*."

Maheśa Paṇḍita used to dance in the ecstasy of *kṛṣṇa-prema* just like a madman. In the *Gaura-gaṇodeśa-dipikā* it is written that in *vraja-lila* he was the cowherd boy named Śrīman Mahābahu. He was an especially close friend of Nityānanda Prabhu, and was present at the festival of yogurt and chipped rice in Panihāṭi that was held by Nityānanda Prabhu. His birthplaced was in what is now called Cākadaha. According to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, some people say that he was the younger brother of Śrī Jagadiśa Paṇḍita from the Yaśoḍāra district of West Bengal. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, on the other hand says that some doubt remains as to his birthplace, as there is a lack of conclusive evidence on this subject.

The eight wave of the *Bhakti-ratnākara* observes that when Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura visited Khaḍadaha he visited Śrī Maheśa Paṇḍita and took *darśana* of his lotus feet. There the *Bhakti-ratnākara* points out that Maheśa Paṇḍita was an extremely exalted soul, a great *mahānta*. In *Caitanya-Bhāgavata*, Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura also refers to him as a great *mahānta*, and says that Maheśa Paṇḍita was especially dear to Nityānanda Prabhu. Maheśa Paṇḍita passed away on the 13th day of the dark moon in the month Pauṣa, which corresponds to December-January.

Narahari Sarakara Thakura

About four miles west of Katwa, within the Barddhaman district is Shri Khanda, the birthplace of Narahari Sarakara Thakura. Shri Mukunda Dasa, shri Madhava Dasa and Shri Narahari Dasa were brothers. Shri Mukunda's son was Shri Raghunandana Thakura.

Shri Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami mentions the devotees of Shri Khanda as a major branch of the Chaitanya tree of Krishna-prema (CC Adi 10:78-79): "The residents of Shri Khanda include Mukunda Dasa, Shri Raghunandana, Narahari Dasa, Chiranjiva, and Sulochana. All of them together form a major branch of the Shri Chaitanya tree. As such they were an abode of the Lord's mercy. This branch produced the fruits and flowers of bhakti in profusion."

Shri Narahari Thakura was connected with many of Mahaprabhu's pastimes. Narahari Chakravarti Thakura writes in Bhakti Ratnakara: "Shri Narahari Thakura's glories are wonderful. In Vrindavana he was Madhumati, and his excellences are boundless." Shri Lochan Dasa Thakura was a dear disciple of Narahari Sarakara Thakura. In his *Chaitanya Mangala* he describes his gurudeva as follows: "Shri Narahari Dasa is my Lord. He has taught me transcendental knowledge, and I am under his influence in many other ways. His abundant Krishna-prema saturates his very being; its symptoms are clearly evident in his body. No one can understand the extent of his devotion and Krishna-prema. In his former existence in Vrindavana he was known as Madhumati, a dear gopi friend of Shri Radha who was a storehouse of sweetness. That very sakhi friend of Shri Radha appeared in the pastimes of Shri Gauranga during the age of Kali as Narahari. He was a stores house of Radha-Krishna prema."

Shri Bhaktivinoda Thakura has mentioned Narahari Sarakara in his Gaura-Aroti song: "*narahari adi kori chamara dulaya, sanjaya mukunda vasughosh adi gaya.*" Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura was as great a singer as he was a poet. He wrote many poems and songs in connection with the pastimes of Shri Gauranga and Shri Nityananda. He has written a Sanskrit book of songs called *Shri Bhajanamrita*. A book of songs called Padakalpataru, describing intense separation from Shri Gauranga has been attributed to Narahari Sarakara Thakura, as have some other books.

Almost all of the songs of Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura have been included in Bhakti Ratnakara by Narahari Chakravarti Thakura. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to tell just which parts of Bhakti Ratnakara are the songs of Narahari Sarakara being quoted by Narahari Chakravarti, and which parts have been written by Narahari Chakravarti Thakura. By the same token it is hard to say exactly which songs of Gaura-lila included in Bhakti Ratnakara are written by Narahari Sarakara Thakura. What complicates this is that both authors bear the same name and often end a song simply by saying "This song was sung by Narahari." This has led to a degree of confusion about the specific authorship of certain parts of the work, although both Naraharis are great devotees and Bhakti Ratnakara is revered as an authorized Vaishnava scripture describing the lives of the great Vaishnava saints.

Shrila Lochan Dasa Thakura has written "Before the birth of Shri Gauranga many different ragas were written by Narahari which sang of Vraja-rasa." Before he wrote songs of Gauranga, Narahari Sarakara Thakura composed many songs glorifying Krishna. Shrila Narahari Thakura passed away on the Krishna *ekadashi* (the eleventh day of the dark moon) in the month of Agrahayana.

The Life and Times of
Paramahaṁsa
Śrī Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura

Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura was a lifelong brahmacārī. He visited all the holy places and the was the best of pure devotees. On the banks of the Padmāvatī river, in the town of Gopālpura lived King Kṛṣṇānda Datta. His older brother was Puruṣottama Datta. The wealth and fame of these two brothers was beyond compare. King Kṛṣṇānanda's son was Śrī Santoṣa Datta. In the month of Māgha, onthe day of śukla-pañcamī, Śrī Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura took his birth. Seeing many auspicious omens surrounding the birth of his son, Rāja Kṛṣṇānanda was very pleased, and gave lavishly in charity to the *brāhmaṇas*. The *brāhmaṇas*, seeing all the auspicious signs surrounding the child's birth, prophesied that the boy was a highly perfected soul and great personality, by whose influence many people would be delivered.

Just as a crescent moon gradually becomes full the king's son grew more effulgent and beautiful with each passing day. His bodily luster was just like molten gold. His eyes were large and shaped like lotus petals. His arms extended to his knees and he had a deep navel. All these are the bodily symptoms of a *mahāpuruṣa*, a great personality. All the local townspeople used to gather to take *darśana* of the beautiful and saintly child. Soon, the boy's *anna-prāśanna-saṁskāra*, or grain-eating ceremony was held. At that time, in order to insure auspiciousness and a bright future for his son, King Kṛṣṇānanda gave much charity.

The king's wife's name was Śrī Nārāyaṇī Devī. Having given birth to such a wonderful son, she was floating in the ocean of ecstasy. She always kept the boy close to her and was always concerned for his well-being, caring for him constantly. The boy was extremely peaceful. Wherever his mother put him, he would quietly stay put. Within the ladies quarters, the ladies used to nurture and care for the child with great ecstasy. Gradually the day of his entrance into school (Hate-Khari) approached. As his schooling went on, everyone was astonished at his amazing intelligence. Simply by hearing a subject once from his gurus he would commit it to memory. In only a short time, he mastered the study of Sanskrit grammar, poetry, rhetoric, and became expert in many different scriptures. But gradually he saw as useless any knowledge which did not promote Hari-bhajan, and soon lost interest in everything but Krishna consciousness. He found that in previous times the learned, who understood what real knowledge is, left everything, renouncing the world of birth and death, and went off to the forest in order to worship the Supreme Lord, Hari.

Day after day, Narottama began to think of how he could become free from family life and constantly engage himself in the Lord's service. He was indifferent to all material enjoyment; where most children usually like to play, he was uninterested in playing games. At this time, hearing the glories of Shri Nityananda and Shri Gauranga, from the lotus lips of the devotees of the Lord, his heart was filled with spiritual joy. As if he had been given new life, he felt great ecstasy. Within a few days of hearing the wonderful qualities of Gaura and Nityananda, he began to chant their holy names in japa day and night. One night the merciful Shri Gaurasundara, surrounded by his eternal associates appeared to Narottam in a dream and gave him darshan.

After this, in order to understand how to become free from family life, Narottam das Thakura began to think day and night of how he could go to Vrindavan. Narottama has prayed, "Hari Hari! kabe haba Vrindavanavasi?" O Hari, when will I become a resident of Vrindavana? When will I serve the beautiful divine couple in Vrindavana with tears in my eyes? In this way, Narottama would constantly sing. Seeing Narottama's indifference to all sense pleasure and his intense renunciation, King Krishnananda and Narayani Devi began to think about what to do with him. Seeing that he was not inclined towards family life, and that he might soon leave home unexpectedly to go to Vrindavan they became very worried. They employed a guard to watch over him, so that he couldn't leave. Narottama Das saw that the difficulties involved in escaping were becoming more impassable than the Himalayas, and thought that he might never be able to go to Vrindavana and absorb himself in the worship of the holy feet of Sri Gauranga. Thinking only of how to get the mercy of Shri Gaura-Nityananda, he began to pray very earnestly for guidance from them. And so it came to pass that some messengers came from the Ruler of Bengal, informing King Krishnananda that the ruler of Bengal wanted to meet with him. In order to meet with the Ruler of Bengal, Raja Krishnananda and his brother Purushottama Datta set out on a long journey to the court of the Ruler of Bengal.

Narottama took advantage of the moment, thinking it to be a good opportunity to leave home. At that time, he secretly left his mother and his protectors, turned towards Vrindavan and began his journey to that holy land. It was on the full moon day in the month of Kartika that Narottama Thakura left his family behind. Passing through Bengal in a short time, he soon found himself on the road to Mathura. All the other pilgrims he would meet were very affectionate toward Narottama, as they could recognize him as the son of the king. He would sometimes

live by drinking milk and sometimes would eat the roots and fruits as he went along. His constant hankering to see Vrindavan made his hunger and thirst go away. As he moved from place to place, he would hear the glories of Gaura and Nityananda from the mouths of many devotees. In this way he was always thinking about their lotus feet, constantly absorbed in meditation. As he walked and walked, he prayed to the lotus feet of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, as he has written: "ara kabe nitai chand...." "When will Nityananda show his mercy to me and free me from the world of birth and death? By his mercy one may give up material enjoyment and purify his mind. In this way, by the mercy of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, one can attain Vrindavana."

In this way, walking and walking, Narottama das arrived in Mathura and, seeing the Yamuna, he offered many prayers. Remembering the names of the Six Goswamis headed by Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana, he began to weep in ecstasy. Gradually he came to Vrindavan itself and entered into that holy land. He was sent by Sri Jiva Goswami to serve the lotus feet of Lokanatha Goswami. Lokanatha Maharaj was very ancient, and was so deeply agonized by the pain of separation from Sri Gauranga that it was as if his very life had been taken away. Narottama offered his obeisances to the lotus feet of Sri Lokanatha and Lokanatha asked him, "Who are you?" Narottama said, "I am your fallen servant. I wish to serve your lotus feet." Lokanatha replied, "How can I, who am unable to serve Gaura-Nityananda, accept any service?"

After this, Narottama Thakura would secretly go in the middle of the night to the place where Lokanatha Maharaj would pass stool and urine, and cleanse the area, maintaining everything there very nicely. After a year of serving in this way, his service was recognized by Lokanatha Goswami, and bestowed his mercy upon Narottama Thakura. On the full moon day of the month of Sravana, he initiated Narottama Thakura as his disciple.

He used to eat by practicing madhukari, and would study the Goswami scriptures under the guidance of Shri Jiva Goswami. Srinivas Acharya was his dear friend, and together the two of them used to study under Jiva Goswami. At that time Shyamananda Prabhu arrived from Gauda-Desh; he also began studying the Goswami's scriptures under the guidance of Shri Jiva Goswami. These three with one mind performed their bhajan in Vrindavana and yet still they felt that their inner aspiration had not attained its complete fulfillment. One day Jiva Gosami called the three of them to him and said "In the future, you must preach the

message of Sriman Mahaprabhu far and wide. Taking the literatures of the Goswamis you must quickly go to Bengal and begin preaching."

The three of them gave up their residence in Vrindavana and accepting the order of their guru on their heads. Taking the treasured scriptures of the Goswamis with them they started on their journey to Bengal. As continued on their way, gradually they came to Vanavishnupur. In Vanavishnupur lived a king of dacoits and thieves named Shri Birhambir. At night he had the scriptures stolen, thinking them to be treasure of some kind. Awakening in the morning and seeing the sc.iptures stolen, the three of them felt as if their heads had been hit by a thunderbolt. Miserable beyond description, the three of them began seraching the four directions for the scriptures, until finally news came to them that King Birhambir had stolen the books and was keeping them hidden in his royal storehouse. At this, Ṣhri Shyamananda Prabhu headed for Utkala and Narottama started for Kheturigram, while Shrinivas Acharya stayed behind, thinking to somehow deliver the Goswami's books from the King's storehouse.

In order to see the holy birthplace of Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Narottama went to quickly visit Nabadwipa. Arriving there, he began chanting "O Gaurahari! O Gaurahari!" on the banks of the Ganges hundreds and hundreds of times and offered many prayers to the Lord. Sitting beneath the shade of a Tal tree, he began to wonder "Where is the actual place of Shri Caitanya's birth?" He sat there for some time, thinking of what to see next. Just then, an old brahmana happened to walk by. Narottama rose to his feet to show respect to the brahmana. The brahmana said, "Baba, from where have you come? What is your name?"

Narottama introduced himself and expressed his desire to see the holy birthplace of Shri Chaitanya.

The brahmana replied, "Today my life has become auspicious, for before my eyes is a dear devotee of Shri Chaitanya."

Narottam said, "Baba! You have seen Chaitanya?!"

The brahmana replied, "What are you saying! Every day Nimai Pandit sits with his disciples at this ghat and discusses the shastra, and then, from a distance I watch him and wonder at the beauty of his divine form. Today I remember seeing that very form sitting beneath this tree here, where he sits every day." As the brahman spoke, tears of ecstasy poured from his eyes.

Narottama said, "Baba! It is the fortune of a lifetime that I have beheld you with these eyes." Saying this, tears fell from his eyes also, and, falling to the ground, Narottama touched the brahmana's feet to his head.

The brahman said, "Baba! I give you my blessings that soon you will attain devotion to the lotus feet of Govinda. At that time, you will preach the glories of Gaura-Govinda far and wide."
After this, the brahmana showed Narottam Das the path to where the house of Jagannatha Mishra was. Finding that path, Shri Narottama walked until he came to the house of Jagannatha Mishra. Ariving at the house of Jagannatha Mishra, he fell down at the door with tears in his eyes and offered his full obeisances, while reciting various prayers in glorification of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Entering within the house he had darshan of the lotus feet of Shuklambara Brahmacari. Narottama offered his respects to his feet. From different signs, Suklambara Cakravarti could understand that Narottam was an agent of Sri Chaitanya's mercy. He asked, "Who are you?"
Narottama introduced himself, explaining that he had been living in Vrindavana under the care of Jiva Goswami and Lokanatha Goswami, and that he had just arrived in Nabadwipa. Shri Lokanatha said, "Baba, you have come from Vrindavan? You were with Lokanatha and Jiva Goswami?" At length, he made Narottama rise, and embraced him heartily, barraging him with endless questions about the well-being, activities, and good health of the Goswamis. In this way he talked on and on with Narottama, as he wanted to hear all about Vrindavana and everything that was going on there. Finally, Narottama got to meet Ishan Thakura, the old servant of Shri Shacimata, and upon meeting him, he offered his prayers of respect at his holy feet and introduced himself. Shri Ishan Thakura touched Narottama's head, bestowing his blessings upon him, and then embraced him affectionately. After this, Narottama met Shri Damodara Pandit and offered his respects to him. After this, narottama went to the house of Shrivas Pandit and offered his respects to Shripati and Shrinidhi Pandit. All of them affectionately embraced Narottama. After staying for a few days in Mayapura, Narottama went to visit the house of Advaita in Shantipura. There he offered his respects at the lotus feet of Acyutananda. Acyutananda introduced himself and inquired after the health and wellbeing of the Vrindavan Goswamis.

After staying in Shantipura for two days, he went on to Ambika Kalna to the house of Gauridas Pandit. At that time, Shri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu was staying there. He was the disciple of Gauridas Pandit. Shri Narottama offered his respects to Hridaya Chaitanya. The two of them affectionately embraced and Narottam gave him news of the activities of the Goswamis in Vrindavan. After staying in Ambika Kalna for a day, he went on to the place where the Ganges,

Yamuna, and Saraswati meet—a village called Saptagram. In that place Uddharana Datta Thakura lived. Shri Nityananda Prabhu had previously given his mercy to the residents of Saptagram, and so all the people there were great devotees. After the disappearance of Uddharana Datta Thakura, the people in the village felt like they had lost their vision. Shri Narottama went to the house of Uddharana Datta Thakura and there, he found that the devotees were absorbed in separation from their guru, in great agony passing their days. Narottama Das offered his respects to all the Vaishnavas there and continued on his way to Kharadaha Gram.

In Kharadaha Gram Shri Nityananda Prabhu had a residence where his two energies, Shri Vasudha and Jahnava Devi lived. Shri Narottama went to the house of Nityananda and remembering the sublime holy name of Nityananda his voice choked up in ecstasy. Shri Parameshvari Das Thakura took Shri Narottama within the inner portion of the house reserved for women and brought him to the lotus feet of Shri Jahnava Mata and Shri Vasudha. Having been introduced to Narottama, who they could understand had received the mercy of Lokanatha and Jiva Goswami, they bestowed their mercy upon him. It is said in the Bhakti-Ratnakara that Both Vasu, who was the knower of all truths, and Shri Jahnava, who is the Supreme Mistress, bestowed their incomparable mercy upon Narottama.

Four days later, Narottama, after having spent much time discussing Krishna-katha in great ecstasy with Shri Jahnava and Vasu, bade them farewell and left for the town of Khanakula Krishna-nagara to see the place of Abhiram Gopal Thakura. Having met him, Narottam offered his respects to the holy feet of Abhiram Gopal. He was passing his days in the great pain of separation from Shri Caitanya and Nityananda. He had become extremely internal, barely spending any time in the plane of external consciousness. Seeeing him in that condition, Narottam wept a great deal. The Gopinath Deity of Abhiram Thakura was wonderful to see. Narottam took darshan of the deity and recited many prayers and verses in praise of the Lord before the deity. The next day, after taking his leave of the house of Abhiram Gopal, Narottam had some inspiration from within and set out for Jagannatha Puri.

Constantly absorbed in thinking of the eternal associates of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, it seemed to Narottama that he reached in Jagannatha Puri in no time at all. Shri Gopinath Acharya and many other devotees, seeing Narottam on the path all went out to greet him on the road. In this way, surrounded by devotees, he arrived in Jagannatha Puri. After Shri Narottama had paid his obeisances at te

lotus feet of Gopinatha Acarya and the Acarya had warmly embraced him, Gopinath Acarya said, "This very day I was hoping that you might arrive." Soon Narottam and all the devotees from Vrindavan and Bengal began talking on and on about Krishna, Gauranga, the Goswamis and many other things. All the devotees were very happy to have Narottam in their midst, and they took him to have darshan in the temple of Jagannatha. While taking darshan of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra, Narottama offered many fine prayers in their glorification and bowed down before them again and again.

After this he went to the samadhi of Haridas Thakura and upon arriving there began to drown in the ocean of Shri Krishna Prema. After this he went to the house of Gadadhara Pandit, and began to shout at the top of his lungs in a loud voice, "O life and soul of Gauranga! O Gadadhara!" Thereafter he took darshan of the Tota Gopinath deity and offered his respects at the lotus feet of Shri Mamu Goswami Thakur who was at that time engaged in the service of Shri Gopinatha.

Thereafter, Shri Narottama Das Thakura drew near to that part of the Gopinath deity where it is said that Mahaprabhu entered into, when he disappeared from this earth by entering into the deity in the presence of his devotees. This is recorded in Bhakti-Ratnakara: "It is difficult to understand the movements of that crown jewel of sannyasis, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Upon his disappearance, all of a sudden the earth became dark. He entered into the Gopinatha mandir and never came out. In this way he left the visible plane and entered into the invisible plane.

(B.R. 8:357).

Hearing of the disappearance of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Narottama said, "O Sachinandana, O Gaurahari!" and fell unconscious on the ground. Seeing Narottama's bewildered state of separation from the Lord, all the devotees began crying tears of prema. After this, Narottama went to the house of Kashi Mishra, took darshan of the generous lotus feet of Shri Gopala Guru Goswami and saw the deities at the Radha-Kanta math. After this he went to the Gundica temple for darshan, and remembered the Lord's pastimes in the Jagannatha vallabha gardens.. Then the visited the Narendra Sarovara, and many other places. After a few days, having experienced great transcendental bliss in the association of the devotees of Jagannatha Puri, and having visited all the places of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes, he took his leave of the devotees and left for Shri Nrishinghapura. Once there, he went to Shyamananda Prabhu's house. Seeing Narottama after such a long time, Shyamananda Prabhu was floating in the ocean

of ecstasy. In the ecstasy of Krishna-prema the two of them joyfully embraced one another.

Shyamananda Prabhu, out of affection kept Narottama in Nrishingapura for many days, not allowing him to leave. Shri Narottama sanctified the town of Nrishingapura by drowning everyone there in a nectarine flood of Sankirtan. Together Shyamananda and Narottama would go on discussing Krishna-katha in great ecstasy, without any knowledge of whether it was day or night. After some time, Shri Narottama Thakurs bade farewell to Shri Shyamananda Prabhu and set out for Gaudadesh.

He quickly came to Shri Khanda. There he offered his respects to the lotus feet of Shri Narahari Sarkara Thakura and Shri Raghunandana. Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura had great affection for Narottama's father, Shri Krishnananda. Offering his respects to Narottama in return, Narahari blessed him many times, touching him on the head with his hand. Shri Raghunandana embraced him affectionately. They asked him to tell them all about the devotees in Jagannatha Puri. In this way, Narottama went from one place to the next in Shri Khanda, his transcendental pleasure always increasing. Narottama spent many days in Shri Khanda in great happiness, performing Sankirtan and dancing in the association of the devotees there.

Bidding farewell to all the eternal associates of Mahaprabhu in Shri Khanda, he went on to Kanthak Nagara, to the house of Gadadhara Das Thakura. He fell before the house of Gadadhara Das, offering his respects, and Gadadhara Das affectionately embraced him. The Bhakti Ratnakara says, "Seeing Narotttama, Gadadhara Das embraced him with great affection, wetting his body with tears of joy." Shri Gadadhara Das Prabhu was passing his days in the pain of separation from Gaura-Nityananda. Narottama Thakura stayed there for two days, and then left to see the birthplace of Shri Nityananda Prabhu in the Radadesh. And so, Narottama went to Ekachakra Gram to visit the holy place of Nityananda's birth. There, an old brahmana who was affectionately disposed towards Narottama showed him the different holy places where Nityananda had performed his lila.

Remembering the holy names of Hadai Pandit and Padmavati Devi, Narottama fell to the ground, his voice choked up with ecstasy. After seeing the holy birthplace of Nityananda, Narottama started out for Kheturi Gram. As the Bhakti Ratnakara says, "After inquiring about the way to Kheturi Gram from the local people, he quickly came to the banks of the Padmavati. Crossing over the Padmavati, he arrived in Kheturi. Upon his arrival, all the people of the village wanted to be the

first to meet him." Since Narottam had been away for so long, there was a big welcoming celebration. Hearing of his arrival, the residents of Kheturi Gram all began making preparations to welcome him. Raja Krishnananda and Shri Purushottama Datta, the father and uncle of narottama had already passed away, and had gone back to godhead, to the spiritual world. But Purushottama, Narottama's uncle had a son whose name was Shri Santosha Datta. After thepassing of King Krishnananda and Purushottama, he was shown much wealth and material enjoyment. Santosh. was the foremost of saintly persons in the village. And when he heard that Narottama Thakura was about to bless that town with his holy footsteps after such a long time, in order to be the first one to greet Narottama, he rushed out with the rest of the devotees to wait for him on the road outside Kheturi Gram.

After some time, Narottama could be seen in the distance. Upon seeing him, Santosh, after bowing prostrate with full obeisances, went forward with tears of ecstasy in his eyes, falling on the ground again and again to take the dust of Narottama's lotus feet. At this, Narottama affectionately embraced Santosh and asked how he had been faring all this time, asking him many questions about his health, happiness and well-being.

A few days later, Narottama Thakura initiated Santosh with the Radha-Krishna mantra. Raja Santosh Datta had previously wanted that a temple to be built and a deity installed. Now he begged at Narottama Thakura's lotus feet tfor his permission. Narottama gladly gave his approval. Within

Within a few months, Raja Santosh Datta had seen to it that a large temple was built. The temple compound included a big storehouse for food, a kirtan hall, a residence hall and ashram for devotees, a bathing pond, a beautiful flower garden, and a guest house. On the full moon day of Phalguna on the festival day of Mahaprabhu's appearance the temple was dedicated and the deities were installed and a great festival, which can only be compared to the Rajasuya-yajna of Yudhistira Maharaja in its vast expasiveness began and was celebrated for miles around. Messengers were sent out for miles around Kheturi Gram, to near and distant lands, to invite kings, landowners, poets, pandits, Vaishnavas, authors, as well as many other illustrious guests. Some were sent far and wide to invite the topmost singers and orators. Preparations were made to install six deities at one time.

The Great Festival of Kheturi Gram

In Buddharigram, at the house of Govinda Kaviraja, the news came of the festival. All the devotees there along with Srinivasa Acharya soon set out for an auspicious visit to the great festival in Kheturi Gram. Within a few days, from Nrishingapura in Orissa came Shri Shyamananda Prabhu, from Khoradoha came Shri Jahnava Mata and Shri Parameshvari Das, Krishnadas Sarakhel, Madhava Acarya, Raghupati Vaidya, Minadekana Rama Das, Murari Caitanya Das, Jnana Das, Mahidhara, Shri Shankara, Kamala Kara Pippalai, Gauranga Das, Nakari, Krishna Das, Damodara, Balaram Das, Shri Mukunda, and Shri Vrindavan Das Thakura. From Shri Khanda came Shri Raghunandana and many other devotees, from Navadwipa came Shri Pati, Shri Nidhi and others, from Shantipura came Advaita Acarya Prabhu's son Achutananda , Shri Krishna Mishra, and Shri Gopal as well as many others. From Ambika Kalna came came Shri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu and many other Vaishnavas. Gradually they all arrived in Kheturi Gram. King Santosh Datta arranged a colossal boat to carry everyone across the river. On the other side of the river, he had arranged for palanqins, oxcarts and other conveyances to carry the devotees into Kheturi Gram. Shrinivas Acharya, Narottam Thakura, and Raja Santosh, went forward to cordially meet the devotees, and after showing them all due respect, they offered the devotees flower garlands, congratulated and welcomed them with great affection. All the devotees were given separate houses and servants. All those great Vaishnavas, who are the saviors of the world graced the land of Kheturi Gram with the dust of their lotus feet, thus making transforming it into a great place of pilgrimage. The Sankirtan of those great souls created a thunderous sound that filled the heavens.

The gates of the temple and the doors of the houses were all well-decorated with banana leaves, waterpots, auspicious things like mango leaves, small waterpots decorated with auspicious signs, different kinds of flowers. All the big gateways and ornamental arches in the city, as well as all the doors of all the houses were decorated with colorful auspicious symbols like swastikas and six-pointed stars. The whole effect was one of unprecedented beauty and enchantment. Just before the festival stage in different places were mountain of all kinds of earthen pots, all kinds of silver vessels, and gigantic containers filled with milk, ghee, and thousands of earthen pots filled with yogurt. All these waterpots, earthen pots, silver vessels and giant containers as well as giant heaps of vegetables, produce, and fruit that were to be prepared for the festival combined to give the appearance of a great and beautiful mountain.

The day before the installation ceremony, the devotees, on the order of Shri Jahnava Mata, began making the final preparations for the installation of the Deities on the holy appearance day of Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. That evening they began the preliminary celebratory ceremonies by performing Sankirtan after Narottama Thakura had first offered chandan and flower garlands to Shri Jahnava Mata and properly worshiped her. Thereafter all the devotees were decorated with garlands, and upon the request of Shri Narottama and Shrivinas Acharya, Shri Raghunandana Thakura sang the mangalacarana, the auspicious invocation. On and on into the middle of the night they devotees performed Sankirtan in order to make the atmosphere auspicious for the great festival that was to follow the next day. After chanting and dancing into the middle of the night the Vaishnavas finally took rest. Many thousands of people honored maha-prasada that night, on the eve of the Great Festival of Kheturi Gram.

The next morning, the installation ceremonies and the celebration of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's appearance, began with all the Vaishnavas performing Maha-Sankirtan. Shrinivas Acharya presided over the auspicious abhishek ceremony for the six deities that were being installed. About an hour before Shrinvas Acharya was to perform the abhishek, the six deities arrived within the temple. At that time, the local devotees, as well as those who had come from far away arrived there. The orators spoke, and the singers sang sweet songs. The expert dancers performed wonderful dances. The different devotees filled the four directions with the ecstatic sounds of the holy name of Krishna, and the glories of the Lord. In this way the four directions were filled with ecstasy.

According to the appropriate rules and regulations of the shastras, Shrinivas Acharya performed the abhishek ceremony, after which the deities were dressed in the finest cloth, and decorated with beautiful ornaments. After thi, different kinds of sweet rice and wonderful vegetable preparations and drinks and thousands of varieties of foodstuffs were offered to the deities. The six deities, Shri Gauranga, Shri Vallabhikanta, Shri Krishna, Shri Vrajendramohan, Shri Radha Ramana, and Shri Radha Kanta, were offered all manner of wonderful preparations of bhoga in different pots. As the bhoga was offered, kirtan was performed, and then after the deities were satisfied in taking all the preparations to their heart's content, they were offered a soothing mouthwash, of Tambula, and then the deities were decorated with fragrant chandan and garlands. After this there was a great arotik, during which, in great ecstasy all the devotees performed sankirtan. After performing

kirtan and dancing in great bliss, all the devotees, forgetting their material bodies fell to the ground offering prostrated dandavats.

After this, Shrinivas Acharya offered the prasadam chandan and garlands to Jahnava Mata. Thereafter, he gave garlands and chandan to all the devotees present. Shrinivas, Shri Narottam, and Shri Shyamananda Prabhu distributed all the sandalwood and garlands to all the devotees present, and when they were finished, on the order of Jahnava Mata, Shri Nrishinga Chaitanya das decorated Shrinvas, Shyamananda and Narottama with flower garlands and sandalwood pulp. Gradually the devotees took their seats in the kirtan hall. Jahanava Mata was seated on an elevated chair at the front of the hall. At that time, on the order of Jahnava Mata and Achutananda, Shri Narottam Thakura Mahashaya began to perform kirtan. Shri Gauranga Das, Shri Gokula Das, and Shri Vallabha Das responded and Devidas played the mrdanga.

Gauranga Das and the others were the most expert in the assembly gathered in that town of all the different kinds of singing and kirtan, and understood perfectly the different classical modulations of voice, performing music by ear, as well as fixed and unfixed meldodies. The sweet and wonderful kirtan of Narottama Thakura with its sweet tune and unique style of voice filled the four directions and the heavens above, causing all the men and women weep to tears of prem, and they all sported in the waves of the Vaikuntha ocean of ecstasy. At that time, Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, along with his own personal associates appeared there and joined in the sankirtan. "Who can describe the wealth of happiness felt by the devotees when, in the midst of their kirtan, appeared the munificent Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. Like a flash of lightning in the midst of a mass of beautiful clouds, Shri Chaitanya Himself appeared within the crowd of devotees through divine manifestation." (B.R. 10: 572)

Mahaprabhu appeared in their midst along with Shri Narahari, Shri Mukunda, Shri Gaouridas Pandit, Shri Advaita Acharya, Nityananda, Madhava Ghosh, Vasughosh, Govinda Ghosh, Acharya Purandara, Shri Mahesh Shri Shankara, Shridhara, Shri Jagadish Pandit, Shri Yadunandana, Shri Kashishwara, and many of the other of the Lord's internal associates. They danced in a large company, with a cast of thousands, and in their midst, Shri Achyutananda, Shri Raghunandana, Shri Pati, and Shri Nidhi as well as many others joined together in the intense devotional ecstasy of that great kirtan of singing and dancing. "How overwhelmed in ecstasy were Advaita and Nityananda! How wonderful was the a circle the devotees made around Shri Chaitanya, who danced in its middle. Shrinivasa

Acharya and Narottama Thakura fully understood these pastimes as the wonderful manifestation of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's causeless mercy! It was an act of grace shown to Shrinivas Acharya and Narottam Thakura. With this their satisfaction was comlete. (B.R. 10: 607)

When Mahaprabhu, who is most affectionate to all devotees, appeared with his own eternal assoicates Shrinivasa Acharya and Narottama Thakura felt complete joy and satisfaction. After the Sankirtan, Shri Jahnava Mata offered the deities some red powder which is usually thrown by Hindus at the time of the Holi festival. After this, upon her order, the devotees began to play with the dye powder by throwing it all over each other in great joy. Everyone's body was covered with the red powder as the devotees threw it on each other. In this way, after the fun they had with the red dye powder, the evening approached and the time came to celebrate the appearance of Shri Gauranga with an abhishek ceremony. when the twilight came, the bathing ceremony began and it was conducted by Shrinivas Acharya, as the devotees sang the abhishek song for Mahaprabhu's appearance ceremony and celebration.

The song went like this:

phalguṇa pūrnimā mangalera sīma
prakaṭa gokule indu
nadiyā nagare prati ghare ghare
uthale ānande sindhu
kiba kautuka paraspare
śacidevī bhāle putra laiyā kole
vilāse sūtikā ghare
bālake dehite dhāya caribhite
keha nā dharaye dhṛti
prahaṇāndha kāre ke cine kāhāre
asaṁkhya lokera gati
bālaka mādhurī dechi aṅkhi bhari
pāsare āpana deha
narahari kaya śacīra tanaya
prakāśe ki navanehā

"At an auspicious time during the full moon evening of the month of Phalguna, Krishna, the Lord of Gokula made his appearance within the town of Nadiya as the

ocean of ecstasy rose, flooding every house. At that tim, everyone had great fun with one another. Sachidevi was healthy and happy as the baby played on her lap within the house of Jagannatha Suta. Morning, noon, evening, and night everyone wanted to see the child, to touch him and hold him. Accepting all kinds of difficulties to get a chance to see the new child, unlimited numbers of people went to the house of Jagannath Mishra to visit.

Everyone packed their eyes to the brim with the charming vision of that sweet boy and seeing that beautiful sight, they forgot their own bodies. Narahari says that the divine appearance of the son of Sachi, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in this way increased everyone's affection and brought their hearts to the point of melting."

Everyone was fully absorbed in the ecstasy of kirtan day and night; no one could think of anything else. Finally it was time for mangal aroti, and the aroti began. When the dancing and singing for Mangal aroti was finished, the vaishnavas offered obeisances to one another and retruned to their kutirs to take their morning baths. In this way, Shri Jahnava Mata quickly took bath, and in order to cook for the Deities, she entered the kitchen. Being expert in the science of cooking, Shri Jahnava Mata, within a short time had prepared various kinds of subjis and other vegetables dishes, sweets, cakes, and beverages. Shrinivas Acharya performed the abhishek and the puja and offered the bhoga to the deities.

After the bhoga was offered and the bhoga arotik was finished, all the great souls present there were seated for taking mahaprasada. Shri Jahnava Mata distributed prasadam with her own hand to the assembled devotees. A great sound of "Hari Hari!" filled the air from time to time as the great devotees assembled there honored prasada. After all the mahants were finished taking prasada, Shri Jahanava Mata requested Shri Narottama, Shrinivasa and Shyamananda Prabhu to take prasada. When everyone else was finished, Shri Jahnava Mata herself took prasada. Outside the kirtan hall, King Santosh Datta distributed various kinds of mahaprasada to the full satisfaction of the thousands of people who had arrived for the festival. When all the friends and relatives of the brahmanas who were present there, as well as all the unexpected and uninvited guests finally finished taking prasada, then the King himself took mahaprasada at home with his personal entourage.

On the second day, Raja Santosha Datta especially requested all the devotees to cook within their kutirs all different kinds of prasada to be offered as before to the deities in a great feast.

On the third day, as the devotees in their places began to make preparations to leave, Raja Santosha Datta with tears in his eyes gave the devotees gold coins, cloth, different kinds of waterpots, and offered all the devotees his respects. All the devotees bestowed many blessings upon the king and embraced him with great affection, before bidding him farewell and beginning their journeys home. Shri Jahnava Mata, accompanied by her own entourage began her journey to Vrindavana. Shrinivas Acharya, and Shyamananda Prabhu remained behind in Kheturi Grama for a few days longer, and then they too left for their own homes, and bade farewell to Kheturi Gram.

After the great festival in Kheturi, Shrila Narottama Thakur's fame spread to the four directions. Ram Krishna Acharya and Ganganarayana Cakravarti as well as many other learned devotees throughout the area soon took shelter of the lotus feet of Shrila Narottama Thakura.

In the town of Gopal Pur lived a brahmana named Shri Vipradas. One day, Narottama Thakura suddenly arrived at his home. Vipradas was extremely happy. He offered him a respectful welcome, offering him a seat and the hospitality of a humble brahamana, in accordance with Vedic tradition. In the place where Vipradas had his rice paddy stored a terrifying snake lived. Out of fear of the snake he didn't dare to go inside that storehouse. Vipradas told Narottama Das of his fear. Hearing this, Narottama Thakura smiled a little bit. He said, "Think nothing of it." And when the Thakura opened the door to the storehouse, the snake had vanished."

When Narottama came out of the storehouse, it could be seen that he had with him the deities of Vishnupriya and Shri Gaurasundara on his lap." (B.R. 10: 202)

Everyone saw a great miracle— Out of the storehouse Narottama Thakura emerged holding deities of Shri Gauranga and Vishnupriya on his lap. Taking those deities of Shri Gauranga Nityananda with him, Shri Narottam Thakura went to Kheturi Grama, where he installed them to be worshipped. At present that deity is found in a place called Gambilat.

The Glories of Narottama

Once when Narottama Thakura passed by the school a learned smarta brahman, insulted Narottama Thakura in front of his students. Blaspheming him again and again, he called Narottama Thakura a Shudra. After this offense, all the limbs of the brahmana began melting away from leprosy. Consumed by his incurable disease and seeing no hope for recovery the brahmana went to throw himself in the Ganges

and die. That night Durga Devi came to the brahmana in a dream and said, "You fool. You have considered a great mahabhagavata, a pure devotee, to be a shudra. Even if you die and take many many millions of births you cannot be delivered. But if you simply go to him and beg forgiveness at his lotus feet, everything will be all right."

The next day, in the afternoon, the brahmana went with a piece of cloth tied around his neck to indicate great humility, and in complete submission, weeping and weeping, fell before the lotus feet of Narottama Thakur, begging his forgiveness. Gradually, as a result of his association with Narottama, his leprosy healed. Narottama Thakura advised him to engage himself in Krishna bhajan. Gradually he became greatly devoted to Narottama Thakura.

One day, Narottama Thakura and Shri Ramachandra Kaviraja went to eh river Padmavati to take bath and at that time they saw two young bramahanas herding many goats and sheep. Narottama Thakura asked the two brahmanas if they were making their young lives successful by performing hari bhajan. The two young brahmana boys listened very attentively. Seeing the beautiful divine forms of Narottama Thakura and Ramachandra Kaviraj, and hearing their sweet words, they approached the place where they stood on the banks of the river and in a very humble mood offered their respectful prayers and obeisances. Narottama Thakura asked them who they were and they introduced themselves, saying, "We come from the village of Goyasa Gram, and we are the sons of a Zamindar named Sivananda Acharya. Our names are Harinam and Ramkrishna. At our house, at present Durga Puja is being conducted, and on the order of our father we are bringing all these goats and sheep to be slaughtered. Please give us some advice as to what we should do."

Seeing the humble mood of the two sons of brahmanas, Shri Thakura Mahashaya smiled sweetly and began to speak as before on the truths of the Bhagavata, explaining what the Vedas say about how karma-kanda is often performed in the modes of passion and ignorance, and how those whose minds are contaminated by the lower modes are candidates for hell. The Vedas explain that the practitioners of karma receive some piety and as a result go to the heavenly planets for s short time, but having once gone to heaven for a short time, they fall into the hellish worlds to suffer. One who, being interested in material enjoyment, is captivated by the sweet words of the Vedas that promise material enjoyment has his intelligence covered. Spending his life in material pursuits, such a person becomes a killer of animals, or a killer of the soul, and after death falls down into hell. All souls are the energy of

Krishna. One who sees the paramatma everywhere, who is free from violence to others, who has no false ego, and who always worships the Supreme Lord becomes free from repeated birth and death and attains the liberated position of divine service at the lotus feet of the Lord."

Hearing these words from the mouth of Shrila Narottama Thakura, the two brahmana boys fell before his holy feet and said, "Please bless these most fallen young brahmanas with the dust of your lotus feet." The Thakur then touched his hand to their heads, saying, "May you attain Krishna-bhakti."

At this, the young brahmana boys set the goats and sheep free, bathed in the Padma river, and went with Shri Ramachandra Kaviraja and Narottama Thakura to the temple of Shriman Mahaprabhu. That day, after taking prasada they again heard from Shri Narottama Thakura and Ramachandra Kaviraja about different aspects of the absolute truth. The next day, after shaving their heads, the two young brahmanas took initiation in the Radha-Krishna mantra. Harinam accepted the mantra from Ramchandra Kaviraja and Ram-Krishna from Narottama Thakura.

After some time, Shivananda Acharya began searching and searching for his sons until he found that they had been seen in Kheturi Gram where they were living as disciples in the ashrama of Narottam Thakura. Shivananda Acharya could not contain his anger.

A few days later, the two brothers returned home. Their foreheads were marked with the tilak of a Vaishnava, their throats decorated with tulasi mala, the twelve parts of their bodies marked with Vishnu tilak, their heads shaved, wearing the shikha of a devotee of Krishna. Seeing all this Shivananda raged with the hot fury of an uncontrolled fire. He told them: "O fools! Where does it say in the . shastra that the position of a Vaishnavas is greater than the position of a brahmana or that by becoming a Vaishnava one is better than a brahmana? You have neglected Durga for so long, but your life is useless without Durga. Moreover, if the Vaishnavas make disciples out of brahmanas it will lead to chaos in society; the brahmanas will lose their position, and if the pandits are defeated, religion will be destroyed and everything will be lost."

Hearing these these words of their father, the two young brahamana boys spoke as follows: "On the other hand, that "religion" or "right work" which causes violence to others, and ends only misery, cannot properly be called religion or proper activity. Rather it must be called irreligion and wrong activity. O father! Giving up the worship of Shalagrama narayana, why have you established the worship of Durga-devi and other demigods? Giving careful thought to the conclusions

surrounding the performance of Shri Narayana bhajana you should understand the worship of Shiva and Durga to be a useless waste of time.
Shivananda Acharya and smarta pandits there were thus defeated by the conclusions given by the brahmana boys. Shivananda began to deeply consider: "If a great pandit were here, he could defeat all this and belittle the position of Vaishnava dharma by counter-argument and word jugglery. Shivananda Acharaya brought a great mahapandit from Mithila named Murari. At that time, for the purpose of having a debate, he called for his sons and told them that he wanted them to explain before a public assemply their conclusions that a Vaishnava is better than a brahmana.
Shri Harinam and Shri Rama Krishna remembering the lotus feet of their guru maharaja explained the siddhanta or conclusions of the Bhagavatam, and the arguments of the smartas were so utterly cut to pieces that when it was his turn to speak the great smarta Mahapandit Murari was unable to put forward any arguments in response. When it was all over, the mahapandit fled the assembly in great embarrassment with his head held low and accepted the occupation of a beggar.

That night, as he lay defeated, Shivananda Acharya began to meditate on Durga Devi. Gradually he fell asleep and Durga Devi appeared to him in a dream. At that time she said: "O Shivananda! Shri Hari is the master of everyone. He is the way, the truth and the light. Those whom he covers with ignorance turn to my worship. And I assure the destruction of those who worship me. Those who aren't Krishna-minded are demons. On the other hand those who are dear devotees of Krishna are really dear to me. For your own sake, if you want to become free from the offenses you have commited and attain auspiciousness, youhad better go to Narottama Thakura and beg forgiveness from his lotus feet. Otherwise I will destroy you, you offender of Vaishnavas!" After speaking these words of chastisement to Shivananda Acharaya, Durga Devi disappeared.

Ganganarayana Chakravarti was a famous and highly learned brahmana living in Gambhila Gram. He heard from the lips of Narottama Thakura the siddhanta of the Goswamis with great attention and took shelter of the lotus feet of Narottama where he later studied very deeply the scriptures of the Goswamis.

There was another brahmana named Jagannatha Acharya who was a worshipper of Durga. One day in a dream Durga appeared to him and said, "O you simple brahmana. Go to Narottama Thakur. Take shelter of his lotus feet. Practice

Krishna bhajan and you will achieve the highest good fortune. Krishna is my master and my guru. Not a blade of grass moves without his wish."

Jagannatha Acharya, after his afternoon bath, went to Kheturi Gram and offered his dandavats at the lotus feet of Narottama Thakura, explaining all that Durga had told him in the dream. Hearing this, the Thakura smiled slightly and said, "You are very fortunate to have attained Krishna's mercy." On an auspicious day the Thakura initiated him in the Radha-Krishna mantra. Shri Jagannatha Acharya became a very dear and confidential disciple of Narottam Thakura.

Seeing the glories of Shrila Narottama Thakura, the society of smarta brahmanas roasted with envy. A large faction of them went to the Raja Nrishinga and petitioned him for redress. They told him: "Maharaja! If you don't rescue the brahmanas, your reputation will be ruined and your death will be assured. The son of Raja Krishnananda Datta, Narottama Thakura, is a shudra—and yet he dares to make disciples of the brahmanas. If this goes on, we shall all be drowned like the members of the Yadu dynasty."

Raja Narasingha said, "I shall protect you. But please tell me, what is to be done?"

The brahmanas said we shall all go to Kheturi Gram along with the great and famous, the world-conquering scholar Mahadigvijay Pandit Shri Rupa Narayana and defeat Narottama. With that great pandit as our leader, Narottama will not be able to say anything. You please assist us in all this."

The king, Raja Nrishingha said, "I myself shall accompany you every step of the way. In this way, that group of brahmanas along with the great and learned world-conquering pandit Rupa Narayana began their journey to Kheturi Gram. As they were traveling on the road someone heard the news and went to Kheturi Gram where he informed Shrila Ramachandra Kaviraja and Narottama Thakura.

When Shri Ramachandra Kaviraja and Shri Ganganarayana Cakravarti heard all this, they became very disturbed. Thereafter, after some inquiry, the two of them came to know that the party of smarta pandits, were about to arrive in the marketplace of a town called Kumara Pura, and that after resting there for one day, they would reach Kheturi Gram the following day. Ramchandara and Ganganarayana quickly went to that marketplace in Kumarpura and the two of them set up two different shops. Shri Ramchandra Kaviraja set up a stall for selling clay pots and Ganganarayana Chakravarti set himself up in a stall selling pan and betel nut.

In this way, along with Raja Narashinga, the smarta pandits arrived in the marketplace of Kumarpura and set up their camp near the shops. The disciples of the pandits went to buy some clay pots for cooking with and went to the pottery shop. The potter (who was Ramchandra Kaviraja) began speaking to them in pure Sanskrit. The disciples of the pandits began speaking in Sanskrit also, and soon they began arguing back and forth in Sanskrit and were defeated. In the same way, when the students went to purchase pan and betel nuts from the shop of the pan-walla (Ganganarayana Chakravarti) he spoke to them in pure Sanskrit. They also began to argue. Gradually their teachers arrived at the place where the argument was going on and found themselves unable to reply to the arguments of the pan-walla and the clay pot walla. Finally the king, Raja Narasingha, arrived on the scene the great pandit Rupa Narayana. At that time a great uproar of argumentation filled the four directions. In the presence of the king, the potter and the pan-walla defeated all the smarta brahmanas, including Rupa Narayana. Raja Nrishinga made some inquries and came to know that the pan-walla and potter were disciples of Narottama Das. At that time he said to the pandits when you are unable to defeat a common, ordinary disciple of Narottama in the matter of siddhanta, how will you defeat Narottam himself?"

The smarta pandits were silent. Realizing their defeat, they made preparations to return to their own villages.

That evening, King Raja Narasingha and Shri Rupa Narayana saw Durgadevi in a dream. She told them, "If you don't accept the shelter of Narottam'a lotus feet, I will cut you all to pieces with my sharpened sword." The following morning Raja Narasimgha and Rupa Narayana arrived at the place of Narottama Thakura. Narottama Thakura received them with great affection and with all due respect and cordiality, offering them a seat. He said, "I am very fortuante to have the company of such highly learned and noble personages such as your good selves." Raja Narashinga and Rupa Narayana, were overwhelmed at Narottama's polite and gentle Vaishnva behavior and fell prostrate at his lotus feet begging forgiveness for their offenses. At length, upon being hearing of the pronouncement that Durga Devi had given them, Narottama smiled very sweetly. Thereafter, within a few days, he initiated them in the he initiated them in the Radha Krishna mantra.

The disappearance of Shri Narottam Das Thakura

Shrila Narottama Thakura was constantly absorbed in singing the glories of Shri Gauranga and Nityananda. Day after day many atheists, agnostics, offenders, Shiva worshippers, followers of Durga, dry logicians, mental speculators and karmis

were purified by the touch of his holy lotus feet. Taking the blessings of Narottama, Shri Ramachandra Kaviraja went to Shri Vrindavana Dhama. After a few months there, he entered into the eteral lila of Shri Radha and Govinda. This extremely terrible and unbearable news came to Shrinivas Acharya, and, unable to bear the separation from his dear disciple, he too passed away from this earth and entered into the eternal pastimes of Radha and Govinda. Hearing all this terrible news, Shrila Narottama plunged into the ocean of separation where he began to drown. In the great and unbearable agony of separation he wrote the song, "ye anilo premadhana." Barely able to keep afloat inthe ocean of separation, Shrila Narottam Thakura went near banks of the Ganges in the village called Gambhilaya and entered a temple of Mahaprabhu. Narottam ordered the devotees to perform kirtan. The devotees began performing Sankirtan. After Sankirtan, Narottam Thakura went to the river's edge, and with tears in his eyes took darshan of the Ganges, offering his obeisances again and again. At that time, he entered the waters of the Ganges. After entering a short distance into the water he requested all the devotees to fill the four directions with the loud chanting of the holy name in Sankirtan. At that time, Shri Ramakrishna Acharya and Shri Ganganarayana Cakravarti began two kirtans in two different places. In the midst of all this, the Thakura told two of them, "Pour the waters of the Ganges over my body." Saying this, everyone was immersed in the waves of Sankirtan. As the kirtan went on they were just ready to take pour Ganges water over the body of Shri Narottama Thakura, when just at that moment Shrila Narottama Das Thakura, who was absorbed in chanting the holy name in Sankirtana, merged into the waters of the Ganges and vanished from worldly view. His disappearance day is celebrated on the Krishna Panchami day of the month of Karttika.

In his *Prema Bhakti Chandrika*, Narottama Thakura has written:

Song One

jaya sanatana rupa prema bhakti rasa kupa
jugala ujjwala rasa tanu
janhara prasade loka pararila saba soka
prakatala kalpa taru jana
prema bhakti riti jata nija granthe su-byakata
kariyachen dui mahashay
jahara srabana haite parananda haya cite
jugala madhura rasaraya
jugala kishora prem, jini laksa bana hema

hena dhana prakashila janra
jaya rupa sanatana deha more sei dhana
se ratana mora gela hara
bhagavata sastra marma nava bidha bhakti dharma
sadai kariba su sebana
anya devashraya nai tomare kahinu bhai
ei bhakta parama bhajan
sadhu shastra guru vakya cittete kariya aikya
satata bhásiba prema majhe
karmi jnani bhakti hina ihare karibe bhina
narottame ei tattwa gaje

Song two

ana katha ana byatha nahi jena jai tatha
tomara carana smriti majhe
abirata abikala tuwa guna kala-kala
gai jena satera samaje
anya brata anya dana nahi karon bastu jnana
anya seba anya deba puja
ha ha krishna bali bali bedera ananda kari
mane ara nahe jena duja
Jibane marane gati radha krishna prana pati
donhara piriti rasa sukhe
jugala bhajaye janra premanande bhase tanra
ei katha rahu mora buke
jugala carana seba ei dana more diba
jugalete manera piriti
jugala kishora rupa kama rati guna bhupa
mane bahu o lila piriti
dasanete trina kari ha ha kishor-kishori
caranabje nibedana kari
braja-raja-suta syama brishabhanu suta nama
shri radhika nama manohari
kanaka-ketaki rai shyama marakata tay
kandarpa darapa karu cura
nata bara shiromani natinira shikarini
dunhun gune dunhun mana jhura

abharana manimaya prati ange abhinaya
tachu paye narottama kahe
diba nisi guna gaya parama ananda paya
mane ei abhilasa hay

"All glories to Sri Sanantan and Rupa Goswami who are fathomless wellsprings of *prema-bhakti-rasa*. They personify ujjvala-rasa. They are desire trees whose mercy frees everyone from pain and sorrow. The books of those two great souls clearly explain *prema-bhakti*. Hearing of them will bring one great joy for they are the *ashraya-vigrahas* of *madhura-rasa*. O Rupa and Sanatana, you are endowed with the greatest wealth of divine love—*radha-krishna-prema*—which in your hands is like thousands of cupid's golden arrows. O Rupa and Sanatana, bestow some of that treasure upon me by piercing my heart with those jeweled arrows. The essence of *Shrimad Bhagavatam* is the ninefold path of bhakti. I shall always follow that path, without taking shelter of any other god. O brothers! *Krishna-bhakti* is the supreme form of *bhajan*. Making the words of *guru*, *shastra* and the *sadhus* my mind's only meditation I shall dive and surface in the ocean of *Krishna-prema*. The *karmis* and *jnanis* have no *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is different—it is without any trace of *karma*, exploitation, or *jnana*, calculation. Thus sings Narottama of the truth."

"I have no other topic of discussion but your lotus feet. I worry my mind with nothing other than the thought of your lotus feet, O Lord. I can speak of nothing else but your holy qualities in the company of other devotees. I have no other vow but your service. I have no other object of charity. I am interested in no other kind of knowledge besides knowing how to please you. I have no other duties. I worship no other gods before you. Chanting, "O Krishna! O Krishna!" I shall wander in ecstasy, thinking of nothing other than You. Radha-Krishna are my goal in life and death and the masters of my breath. Performing my bhajan only for them I rise and fall in the ocean of prema, divine love. I pray that I may always maintain this conception within my heart as my highest ideal: Let me serve the lotus feet of Shri Shri Radha and Govinda. Let my mind be filled with dedication to their divine forms whose beauty surpasses that of Cupid and Rati. With a straw between my teeth I fall at their feet and present my humble petition: "O Kishora-Kishori! O son of King Nanda, Shyamasundara! And O daughter of King Vrishabhanu, Shri Radhika, you who enchant even Hari, you whose bodily complexion is the color of a golden lotus. O Krishna, whose bodily color is that of a blue jewel, whose beauty mocks cupid. O topmost dancer and danseuse, Shri Krishna and Shri Radha: Please dance within my mind. O you whose beauty increases the charm of your

dazzling ornaments, my only wish is that day and night, in great ecstasy, I shall go on singing your glories."

Caitanya Bhagavata Adi-lila Chapter Nine

Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the childhood pastimes of Nityananda up to his twelth year, during which time he re-enacted the divine pastimes of Krsna, Rama, Vamana, and the other avataras of Vishnu. This chapter also describes his tour of different holy places which continued until his twentieth year.

On the order of Gaura Krsna, Ananta Deva had already made his appearance in the village of Ekacakra in Radades. In this way, Nityananda Prabhu appeared like the moon from the sea of the womb of Padmavati, the wife of Hadai Oja. And just like the rising moon, he dispelled all the darkness covering the land of radha by his auspicious appearance. As a child, Nityananda constantly played with his boyhood friends imitating the pastimes of Krsna.

Once, his friends took the role of the assembly of gods, who were desrious of petitioning the Lord to relieve the burden of evil oppressing the Earth. Nityananda Prabhu took with him a child who was dressed as the earth, and together with the children who acted the roles of the different assembled gods, he went to the banks of the river Ganges. There he addressed the Lord who rests in the ocean of milk, Ksirodaksayi Visnu. At that time, one of the children took the part of Lord Visnu, and hiding unseen by the other children spoke in a grave voice that all could hear: "I shall surely be born in Goloka Mathura to lighten the burden of the Earth."

And so Nityananda Prabhu enacted the different pastimes of Krsna that the Lord performed during the Dvapara age. He enacted the pastimes of the marriage of Vasudeva and Devaki, the birth of śrY Krsna in the prison of Kamsa, the journey of Vasudeva to Nandagram and how he carried Krsna over the Yamuna river, as well as his return from Nandagram and how he brought Mahamaya who had just appeared as the daughter of Yasoda with him.

He enacted the slaying of Putana, the breaking of the cart, Krsna's butter stealing pastimes, the slaying of the demons, Dhenuka, Agha, and Baka. He also displayed the pastimes of the pasturing of the cows, the lifting of Govardhan hill, the stealing of the gopis clothes and the Lord's bestowal of mercy upon the wives of the sacrificial brahmanas. He performed the pastimes of sending secret advice to Kamsa in the guise of Narada, the killing of the Kuvalaya elephant and the wrestlers Canura and Mustika, and the killing of

Kamsa.

Nityananda Prabhu also enacted the pastime of Vamanadeva's cheating Bali of the three worlds, and took the role of RĀmachandra. His friends acting the part of monkey soldiers pretended to build a bridge of floating stones across the ocean, in imitation of the pastimes of Rama. Once, Nityananda took the part of Laksman, and, bow in hand, would storm the palace of Sugriva. Once he took the part of Rama Himself, enacting the pastime of breaking Parasurama's pride. Once, taking the role of Laksman he pretended to kill Indrajit and then swoon, hit by the powerful arrows of Ravana, the demon-king.

He would enact the pastime of having the medicine from Gandamadana Hill brought by Hanuman and would recover from his wounds after receiving the medicine. Nityananda spent twelve years enacting these kinds of pastimes. At that time, he went to visit the different holy places in order to purify them from the sins left behind by the pilgrims who visit them.

He toured the holy places in both Northern and Southern India, on the pretext of pilgrimage and in this way was occupied until his twentieth year when he arrived in Nabadwip and met Caitanya MahĀprabhu. In the course of his wandering through the different holy places, Nityananda Prabhu met Madhavendra Puri, Isvara Puri, and Brahmananda Puri. Nityananda passed many days enjoying the ecstasy of krsna-katha in the company of Madhavendra Puri and his disciples. He then visited Setubandha, Danatirtha, Mayapuri, Avanti, Godavari Jiyura Nrsmha, Devapari, Trimala, Kurmaksetra and many other holy places.

At last he arrived at Jagannatha Puri, where he took darsan of Jagannatha Deva and was profoundly moved to ecstasy upon seeing the Deity. From Jagannatha Puri, he returned again to Mathura. The chapter closes with an explanation of Lord Nityananda's renunciation.

Lord Nityananda who is identical with the powerful Balarama himself, manifest during this period his pastimes of preaching the holy name in love of God. The chapter concludes with a description of greatness of Nityananda Balarama

TEXT OF CHAPTER

All glories to śrY Krsna Caitanya, the ocean of mercy. All glories to Nityananda Prabhu, the friend of the helpless. All glories to the life and soul of śrY Advaita Candra. All glories to He who is the only shelter of śrivĀsa and GadĀdhara. All glories to Visvambhara, the son of Jagannatha Misra and Sacidevi who is always beloved by his devotees and followers.

Before the advent of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Ananta deva himself had appeared on the order of the Lord. He took birth in the Radha Desa to help enact the divine lila of the Lord. His father's name was Hadai Oja and his mother's name was Padmavati. He appeared in the village of Ekacakra within the land of Gauda. From infancy he was sober, highly intelligent and supremely qualified. The baby boy was millions of times more beautiful than cupid.

From the moment of his birth there appeared within the Radha Desa, all-auspicious symptoms. All varieties of famine, poverty, and unhappiness immediately disappeared. On the day that Sri Gaurachandra made his advent in Sridhama Nabadwip, Nityanadna Prabhu shouted with joy. The vast universe was pervaded with the sound of his cries and the whole world became astonished. Some said, "The thunderbolt has descended to Earth." Many could understand that the mightly disturbance was the result of some divine power. Some said, "We know the cause. The master of Gauda has spoken in a voice of thunder. And in this way, everyone gave their different opinions. But by the power of the illusory energy of Krsna, no one could recognize the transcendental position of Nityananda Prabhu.

In this way, keeping his divine nature unmanifest, the supreme Lord, Nityananda Prabhu delighted in the company of children. In all the games that the Lord played with the children, Krsna was the center. Indeed, their play was nothing but the lila of the Lord. Nityananda Prabhu would hold an assembly of the gods with one of the children acting the part of the Earth presenting the petition of the demigods to the supreme Lord Visnu. All of them would go along with the Earth to the banks of the river where together they would pray to the hidden Lord of the universe, Ksirodaksayi Visnu.

Unseen by all, one of the boys would loudly proclaim from his hiding place, "I will shortly be born in the cowherd village of Mathura." Another day, Nityananda Prabhu and his childhood friends would gather in the village to celebrate the marriage of Vasudeva and Devaki. Once, having made their playhouse into the prison of Kamsa, he re-enacted the pastime of Krsna's divine appearance in the dead of night. Nityananda Prabhu built a cowherd settlement and took Krsna there, deceiving Kamsa by substituting Yogamaya for Krsna within the prison.

Another time he dressed up one of his childhood friends as Putana, while another boy, climbing his body pretended to such his breast like the baby Krsna. Once, having built a cart made of reeds with the help of the children, Nityananda Prabhu broke it. Nityananda Prabhu would bring his childhood friends to the house of the local milkman and steal milk and yogurt, following in the footsteps of Krsna. His friends never left his company, nor would they return to their homes, but day and night they would play in the

company of Nityananda Prabhu.

Nor did their mothers and fathers complain, but all loved Nityananda with their hearts and souls. He would hold his relatives and friends in affectioanate embrace. Upon beholding his amazhing childhood pastimes, everyone would say, "We have never seen such wonderful playing. How is it possible that this child has learned all these activities of Krsna. One day having made serpents out of the leaves of trees, he brought the children to a pond. One of the children would enter the water and float motionless. Nityananda Prabhu would awaken him.

One day he took the children into a grove of palm trees, where they played at killing the demon Dhenuka and tasting the palm fruits known as tal fruits. He would often go to the pasturing grounds and there play many different games with the children. After constructing toy demons and naming them Baka, Agha, and Vatsa, he would kill them. Nityananda Prabhu would return home with his childhood in the afternoon, all of them blowing on buffalo horns.

One day he would imitate Krsna's pastime of lifting Govardhana Hill. Another day after constructing a replica of Vrndavana, he would play there with his friends. One day he would steal the clothes of the gopis and another day would visit the wives of the brahmanas engaged in sacrifice. On eof the children would take the part of Narada Muni and disguising himself with a beard he would give confidential advice to Kamsa. One day one of the boys dressed as Akrura and took Krsna and Balarama away from Vrndavana on the order of Kamsa. Nityananda Prabhu cried in grief, feeling separation from Krsna in the mood of the gopis. Streams of tears would flow from his eyes in the view of all the children.

Influenced by the illusory energy of Visnu, no one could understand the transcendental nature of Nityananda Prabhu's divine lila as all the children played in his company. After building a replica of Mathura, he would roam with the boys. Some of them would take the position of garland-makers and some would wear the garlands. Nityananda Prabhu would dress one of them as Kubja and would become perfumed by her.

One day, upon making a bow, Nityananda Prabhu broke it with a thundering noise. After killing the elephant Kuvalayapida and the wrestlers Canura and Mustika, he would knock to the ground and drag away by the hair one of the boys who had been made to play the role of Kamsa. Having killed Kamsa he would dance merrily with the children. In this way, Nityananda Prabhu's pastimes as a boy made all the people of Ekacakra laugh with delight.

Nityananda Prabhu imitated in his pastimes the transcendental activities of all the avatars of Godhead. One day Nityananda Prabhu played Vamana and another child

played Bali Maharaja. Inthis way, Nityananda Prabhu would deceive him into giving the three worlds in charity as one of the children, dressed as an old man, played the role of Sukracarya and forbid the gift. Then, Nityananda Prabhu as Vamana, after accepting the alms of Bali, placed his lotus feet upon that boy's head.

One day, Nityananda Prabhu played at constructing a bridge of trees and stones across the ocean as all the children played the role of monkey soldiers. In this way he could chop veranda plants and throw them into the water, pretending they were giant trees as the children would shout Jaya Rama! Jaya Raghunatha! Victory to Rama! Victory to the Lord of the Raghu dynasty!

The Lord Himself assumes the role of Lasman, and bow in hand, he made his way to the palace of Sugriva in a fit of anger, saying, " You wretched monkey! My Lord, Rama, is becoming distressed by your actions. My Lord is waiting on Malyavan mountain, burdened with grief. And you, O wicked monkey, are busy making merry with women! If I am to spare your life, then go to Rama as fast as you can, and offer him your help. "

Another day, in the mood of Laksman, he would chastise Parasurama in anger, saying, "O brahmana--I can't be held accountable for what happens to you if you do not flee at once." The children, in their innocence, would take Nityananda Prabhu's absorption in the mood of Laksman to be nothing more than childish play. They did have any knowledge of his position as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Some of them would roam about as the five monkeys, and taking the role of Laksman, Nityananda Prabhu would ask, "Who are you monkeys who roam the forests? Tell me! I am the servant of Raghunatha!"

They would tell him, "We wander here in fear of Bali. Lead us to Rama! We accept the dust of your feet upon our heads." Giving them hearty embrace, he would lead them to his master and bow down before the feet of Rama, falling flat like a rod. In the role of Laksman, one day Nityananda Prabhu was beaten by Indrajit. Another day he would play at killing Indrajit. Having made one of the boys take the role of Vibhisana, he would lead Vibhisana in the presence of Rama and then install him as the king of Lanka.

Another child would shout, "Lo! Hear I come as Ravana. Beware the shafts from my bow. Let Laksman protect you if he can." With this, the child playing the role of Ravana hurled a lotus flower at Nityananda Prabhu, who dropped to the ground, senseless, in the mood of a defeated Laksman.

Having swooned away, Nityananda Prabhu would not arise. Although the boys tried in many ways to arouse him in many different ways, Nityananda Prabhu showed no sign of life in any part of his body. The children all put their hands to their heads and wept and cried. Hearing their cries Nityananda Prabhu's mother and father hastened to

the spot. Finding no life in their child, both of them fell upon the ground senseless.

All the people of the village gathered there and gazed upon the scene in amazement. The children explained everything. Someone from the crowd said, "I understand the reason for all this. A long time ago, an actor who was playing the role of Dasaratha gave up his life upon hearing of the exile of Rama to the forest." Another said, "The boy is only acting his part. As soon as Hanuman brings the medicine and administers it to him, he will recover.

Of course, Nityananda Prabhu had already explained this to the children. He had told them, "As soon as I fall down, all of you make a circle around me and cry. After a short period of time, send away Hanuman. My life will return if the medicine is applied to my nose." But as soon as the Lord, who was perfectly playing his role, became unconscious, the children became very much upset. They completely lost their judgement and no one could remember Nityananda Prabhu's instruction.

They simply cried and cried, and called out, "O brother: get up!" But the bystander's remarks made them remember the Lord's advice. So, one of the children walked off as Hanuman and another child, dressed as a sage stood in his way. Greeting him with an offer of fruits and roots, the sage said, "Please stay with me a while, dear friend, and bless my humble retreat. Only by great good fortune can one attain the company of one like yourself. "

Hanuman replied, "My work is urgent. I must make haste. I cannot stop; please excuse me but I must say goodbye. You must have heard of Laksman, the younger brother of Rama. Ravana has struck him unconscious with his sakti arrow. I must hurry to Gandhamadana mountain. His life may be saved only if I bring the proper medicine." The child who played the role of Hanuman spoke all these lines as he was trained by Nityananda Prabhu. Eveyone looked on in amazement.

At the request of the sage, Hanuman went to a nearby lake to bathe. Another child caught hold of his feet from under the water. In this way, the child took the part of a crocodile and pulled Hanuman into the water. The child-actor playing Hanuman dragged the crocodile to the bank and the defeats him. Then Hanuman encountered an even more formidable foe.

A child disguised as a Raksasa ran after Hanuman and threatened to eat him, saying, "You have defeated the crocodile, but now you must defeat me. Who will revive Laksman if I swallow you alive?" Hanuman answered, "Your Ravana is a worthless dog. Take to your heels and be gone." Inthis way the two children fought with each other until they had each other by the hair. They began beating each other with their fists. After some time, Hanuman defeated the Raksasa.

Finally, the child playing the role of Hanuman made his way to Gandhamadana mountain. There, some boys dressed as Gandharavas fight with him for some time, and, after defeating the Gandharvas, Hanuman brought Gandhamadana mountain away on his head. One of the children, acting as a doctor, remembering Rama, applied the medicine to the nose of Nityananda Prabhu, who was playing the part of Laksman. At last, the great Lord, Nityananda Prabhu regained consciousness and came to his feet.

At this, all the parents and everyone else laughed. Hadai Pandit took the child into his arms and all the boys were delighted. Everyone asked, "My dear child, "Where did you learn all these things?" And the Lord would laughingly answer, "These are all my divine pastimes."

In his early childhood, the Lord's body was delicately fair. No one wanted to give up embracing him. Everyone loved him more than they loved their own sons. By the illusory potency of the Lord, no one could recognize him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this way, from his early childhood, Nityananda Prabhu enjoyed nothing better than rehearsing the pastimes of Krsna.

All the children, giving up their parents and their homes, would constantly play in the company of Nityananda Prabhu. I offer my humble obeisances hundreds of times unto the lotus feet of all those boys who thus played with the Supreme Lord Nityananda Prabhu. In this way, Nityananda Prabhu perfromed his pastimes, and from infancy, nothing pleased him except the lila of Sri Krsna.

Who has the power to describe the transcendental pastimes of ääAnanta? They are only revealed through his mercy, of his own accord. And so, Nityananda Prabhu stayed at home for the first twelve years of his life. At that time he went on pilgrimage, visiting the different holy places of India. He wandered as a pilgrim until his twentieth year and at that time he appeared before Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Listen to the account given in this Adi-lila of Caitanya-Bhagavata of the pilgrimage of Nityananda Prabhu the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is blasphemed only by wicked and sinful atheists. Nityananda Prabhu delivered the whole world. He is an unparalleled ocean of mercy. Only by his mercy do I understand the truth about Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Only by his means has the greatness of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu been proclaimed. Listen to how Nityananda Prabhu, the best beloved of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, traveled to all the holy tirthas in India.

The Lord first visited the holy place known as Vakreswara. From there he traveled all alone to the grove of Vaidyanatha. After visiting Gaya, he went to KaŚi, the seat of Lord Siva, where the current of the Ganges begins to flow northwards. Nityananda Prabhu became filled with joy at the sight of the Ganges. At Kasi he bathed in the

Ganges, and with an unsatiated thirst drank its sweet waters. He performed his morning bath at Prayaga in the month of Magha and from there went to the place of his previous birth in Mathura. Having sported in the waters of the Yamuna at Visrama-ghata, the Lord wandered about Govardhana hill in great ecstasy and in this way he walked through all twelve forests of Vrindavan.

He visited the house of Nanda Maharaja at Gokula, and sitting down at that holy place, he wept out of emotion. Offering his obeisances to Madana Gopala the Lord journeyed to Hastinapura, the home of the pandavas and beholding the place of those great devotees, the Lord shed tears.. All those who loved there, being nondevotees, could not understand. He bowed down, beholding the glories of Balarama in the city of Hastinapura and in his ecstasy, shouted, "May Balarama, the holder of the plow, deliver us all." Then, Nityananda Prabhu went to Dvaraka where he bathed in the sea in great joy. He went to Siddhapura, the seat of Kapila, and at the holy place known as the tirtha of the fish, Matsya-tirtha, distributed large quantities of cooked rice at a great festival. Nityananda Prabhu visited Siva-Kanchi and Visnu Kanchi and laughed upon seeing the bitter schism between the followers of Vishnu and the followers of Siva.

He went to Kuruksetra, Priti-daksa, Bindhu-sarovara, Prabasa, and Sudarsana tirtha, and after paying a visit to the holy tirtha of Trita-kupa, he went to Nisala and from there to Brahma-tirtha and then to Cakra-tirtha. The Lord visited Pratisrota which is near the Saraswati of the West. And from there, that great magnanimous personality, Nityananda Prabhu, travelled to Naimisaranya.

At that time, Nityananda Prabhu went on to the city of Ayodhya and wept much upon beholding the holy birthplace of Sri Rama. Then he went to the kingdom of Guhaka, the candala, where Nityananda Prabhu fell unconscious out of ecstasy. Remembering the devotion of Guhaka-candala, Nityananda Prabhu was unconscious for three days. In all those forests, where the Supreme Lord Rama had stopped to spend a few days, Nityananda Prabhu rolled on the ground in the agony of separation.

He went to the banks of the Sarayu river and bathed in her waters and from there went to Kausaki and from there to the sacred retreat of Paulastya the sage. After bathing in all the holy tirthas of the Gomati, Gandhaki and Soma rivers, he climbed to the summit of Mount Mahendra, and having paid his obeisances there to Parasurama, he proceeded to Hardwara, where the flow of the Ganges originates on this Earth. He then visited Pampa, Bhima-rati, and Sapta-Godavari, after bathing in the Tirthas of Benva and Bhipasa.

The great Nityananda Prabhu then had a view of Karttika and went to the mountain of Sri, where Siva and Parvati dwell. In the forms of a brahmana and his wife,

Siva and Parvati resided on the top of the mountain known as Sri. Both of them recognized their own cherished Deity, Nityananda Prabhu, who had thus journeyed to the holy places disguised as an avadhuta. Both of them rejoiced upon beholding their guest, and the goddess Parvati herself, with her own hands, joyfully cooked prasadam for Nityananda Prabhu. As Siva and Parvati made offerings of food to Nityananda Prabhu with great regard, he smiled and offered his obeisances to both of them.

The confidential talks which they held between one another can be understood only by Krsna Himself. Taking his leave, Nityananda Prabhu went to Dravida. After visiting Vyenkattanatha, Kamakosti-puri, and Kanch, he arrived at the famed stream of the Kaveri and from there went to the holy place of Sri Rangam, where he stayed for some time. From there he went to Hari-ksetra, and then visited Mount Rsabha. Then he travelled to South Matura, Krtamala, Tamraparni, and then journeyed northward to the Yamuna, where he visited the home of Augustya on Malaya mountain.

The people there were filled with great joy on beholding the magnanimous Nityananda Prabhu who accepted their hospitality, and from there with great pleasure, he travelled to Badarikasrama. Nityananda Prabhu stayed for some time at the abode of Naranarayana Rshik and passed his time in complete seclusion. From there he journeyed to the residence of Vyasa, who recognized Nityananda Prabhu as the mighty Balaram Himself.

Making himself visible, Vyasa welcomed his guest and the Lord offered his obeisances before Srila Vyasadeva. At that time, Nityananda Prabhu travelled to the seat of the Buddhists, where the Lord found them sitting together with one another. He questioned them, but no one replied in answer. Being angered by the Buddhists, the Lord kicked them on the head. Laughing, the Buddhists fled and Nityananda Prabhu continued on his pilgrimage undismayed.

At that time, the Lord arrived at the town of Kanyaka, and after visiting Durga-devi, travelled to the South Indian sea. Thereafter Nityananda Prabhu went to the town of Sri Ananta and from there to the pond of the five dancing apsaras or celestial nymphs. The Lord then visited the temple of Siva called Gokarna. He travelled from door to door over Kerala and Trigartha and after beholding the honored wife of Dvaipayana, Nityananda Prabhu travelled to Nirbindhya, Payosni, and tapti, inthe course of his divine activities.

He visited Reva, the town of Mahismati and Malatirtha and then the Lord turned westwards, journeying by way of Suparakha. Nityananda Prabhu was devoid of all fear. He was never afraid of anyone, thorughout the whole of his travels. His body appeared weak, by reason of constant absorption in Krsna consciousness. Nityananda Prabhu

laughed and cried at intervals. Who could understand his transcendental moods? Such were the travels of Lord Nityananda Prabhu as he wandered from one place to the next, visiting the holy tirthas.

At that time, quite by accident, he met Madhavendra Puri. The body of Madhavendra Puri was surcharged with divine love for Sri Krsna. Madhavendra Puri was accompanied by all his disciples, who were filled with Krsna prema. MĀdhavendra PurY tasted no other food besides the mellow qualities of Krsna. The mellows of Krsna consciousness were his only sustenance. His holy body was the place of Krsna's pastimes. There can be no greater praise of his love for Krsna than to say that the great Advaita Acarya Prabhu was the disciple of MĀdhavendra PurY.

As soon as Nityananda Prabhu beheld MĀdhavendra PurY he lost external consciousness, and lay motionless, being overpowered with divine love. As soon as MĀdhavendra PurY saw Nityananda Prabhu he also lost external consciousness and became oblivious of the world around him. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu himself declared again and again that MĀdhavendra PurY is the original teacher of pure devotion. As Nityananda Prabhu and MĀdhavendra PurY fainted upon seeing one another, Isvara Puri and all the other disciples of MĀdhavendra PurY wept.

After regaining external consciousness, both of them began to embrace one another, crying tears of ecstasy. The two great teachers rolled on the ground in the ecstasy of divine love, and, transformed by their jubilation, shouted words of joy with voices of thunder. Tears of love flowed like rivers from the eyes of those two great masters. And wet with their tears, the Earth felt blessed. There was no end to the display of transcendental ecstasy shown by those two great souls whose bodies shivered as tears flowed from their eyes and their hair stood on end, for Caitanya Mahaprabhu himself danced within their hearts.

Nityananda Prabhu said, "Today I have obtained the complete fulfillment of all the pilgrimages that I have ever performed, for today, my eyes have beheld the holy feet of Madhavendra Puri. My life is glorified by witnessing such divine love as his. Holding Nityananda Prabhu in a close embrace, Madhavendra Puri, choked with divine love, could utter no words of reply. And in his joy, MĀdhavendra PurY had no wish to release Nityananda Prabhu from his embrace. Isvara Puri, Brahmananda Puri, and all the other disciples of MĀdhavendra PurY, felt irresitably attracted to Nityananda Prabhu. Although they had met so many renounced saints, they could detect no trace of love for Krsna in any of them. And by meeting those unfortunate and wicked souls, they gaines nothing but grief.

And being aggrieved, they sought refuge in the forests. But now they were relieved

of all their sorrows upon beholding in one another the manifestation of love for Krsna. For days, Nityananda Prabhu travelled in the company of MĀdhavendra PurY, delighting in discussing the pastimes of Krsna. MĀdhavendra PurY's devotional service is wonderful to speak of. He would faint upon seeing a blackish cloud. Day and night, intoxicated by love for Krsna, he laughed and cried, ranted and raved, and shouted in grief just like a drunkard.

And Nityananda Prabhu, intoxicated with the nectar of Govinda's sweetness, would stagger and stumble. Falling on the ground, he would laugh heartily. On beholding the wonderful mood of MĀdhavendra PurY and Nityananda Prabhu, the brotherhood of disciples constantly chanted the name of Hari. Intoxicated by the sweet taste of divine love, no one knew when it was day or night, and time lost all meaning. Who can understand the talks that Nityananda Prabhu had with MĀdhavendra PurY? Only Krsna knows their meaning. MĀdhavendra PurY could not bear to part company with Nityananda Prabhu, but took delight in his constant association. He said, "Although I have traveled to many holy tirthas, I could find no divine love of Godhead such as yours anywhere. Having obtained the company of such a friend as Nityananda Prabhu, I have realized the mercy of Krsna. Krsna is so kind! Wherever one can get the association of Nityananda Prabhu, that place is more than Vaikuntha and all the holy tirthas combined. If one only hears of the devotion of such a devotee as Nityananda.Prabhu, he is sure to attain Sri Krsnacandra. And whoever has the least bit of aversion to Nityananda Prabhu, can never be loved by Krsna even if he is a devotee of Krsna.

In this way, MĀdhavendra PurY gloriifed Nityananda Prabhu day and night and served him with love and attention. Nityananda Prabhu himself thought of MĀdhavendra PurY as his guru and thus engaged, those two great souls were so absorbed in love of Krsna that they could not tell whether it was day or night. In this way, after passing some time in the company of MĀdhavendra PurY, Nityananda Prabhu set out on his journey to the bridge of Rama known as Setubandha, at the southernmost tip of India.

MĀdhavendra PurY went off to visit the Sarayu river. Being completely absorbed in Krsna, neither of them could remember anything of their own physical bodies. Completely forgetful of their own selves, they passed their days in the agony of separation from each other and so their life was preserved. For if any external consciousness had remained, it would have been impossible for them to survive the agony of separation. Whoever hears this account of Nityananda Prabhu and MĀdhavendra PurY with faith and devotion, obtains the treasure of love for Krsna.

In this way, Nityananda Prabhu wandered about in the ecstasy of divine love and after some time arrived at Setubandha, the bridge of Rama. After bathing in the ghat at

Dana-tirtha, he went to Ramesvara, and from there, arrived in Vijayanagar. Having visited Mayapuri, Avanti, and Godavari, the Lord arrived at the seat of Jiyur-Nrsmhadeva. He visited Trimala, and the sacred shrine of Kurmanatha. At last he set out to behold Sri Jagannatha-deva, the moon of Nilacala.

As soon as he entered the city of Lord Jagannatha, the blissful master of Nilacala, he fainted away upon beholding the sight of the Lord's cakra. He took darsan of Jagannatha, seeing his fourfold form as the Caturvyuha fully manifest in all his joyousness with the whole body of his servitors. Nityananda Prabhu lost his consciousness in the ecstasy of that vision, and once recovering, lost it again. This went on again and again. Nityananda Prabhu experienced shivering, perspiration, tears of joy falling on the ground, shouting words of ecstasy in a thunderous voice.

Who can describe the ecstasy of Nityananda Prabhu? After spending some time in this way in Jagannatha Puri, Nityananda Prabhu resumed his journey and with great enthusiasm, visited the place where the Ganges meets the ocean. Who can fully describe all his travels to the different holy places? I have only recorded a fraction of them, by his mercy. After visiting the holy tirthas in this way, Nityananda Prabhu returned to Mathura. he took up residence in Vrindavana and stayed there day and night absorbed in thoughts of Krsna.

He ate nothing, and only now and then would drink some milk if someone gave it to him without his asking for it. Nityananda Prabhu thought to himself, "Sri Gauracandra is staying in Nabadwip, but his divine glory is remaining concealed. As soon as the Lord chooses to manifest his divinity, I shall immediately go to Nabadwip and fulfill my role in his service. In this way, having made up his mind, Nityananda Prabhu neither went to Nabadwip, nor left Mathura, but sported constantly in the waters of the Yamuna and played in the dust of Vrindavana with the children.

And although Nityananda Prabhu possesses complete potency in all respects, he abstained from bestowing devotion for Visnu upon anyone. Thinking for himself that when Lord Gauracandra would manifest himself, then the time would come for performing the pastime of distributing divine love on the order of the Lord. By thinking that nothing should be done except by the command of śri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the greatness of the lord's service is not reduced, and so Nityananda Prabhu awaited the command of the Lord.

Nothing moves without the order of the Supreme Lord, śrY Caitanya Mahaprabhu. And no one can do anything without his sanction, even if he is Ananta, Brahma, Siva, or any of the gods. The destroyers, rulers, and maintainers of the universe do their duty only upon the order of Sri Caitanya. Those sinners who are aggrieved in

their minds by this, are completely unfit to be seen by a Vaishnava. The three worlds are witness to the fact that everyone obtained the treausre of love of god by the mercy of Nityananda Prabhu. He is the first of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's devotees. His tongue treasures the glorious praise of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Nityananda Prabhu discourses on Caitanya night and day; by serving him, devotion to Sri Caitanya is obtained. All glories to Nityananda Prabhu the primeval Lord, by whose mercy we can understand the glories of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Attachment to Nityananda Prabhu is the gift of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mercy. For one who knows Nityananda Prabhu there is no danger anywhere. If someone wishes to cross beyond this world of darkness and dive into the ocean of devotion, let him serve the moonlike Nityananda. Some say that Nityananda Prabhu is Balarama Himself. others say that he is the abode of divine love for Sri Caitanya; let them say whatever they like. Whether Nityananda Prabhu is an ascetic, a devotee, or a sage; whatever he may be in relationship to Sri Caitanya, may his lotus feet be implanted firmly within the hearts of everyone. If after hearing all the good qualities of Nityananda Prabhu, there is still a sinful soul left who doesn't appreciate him or who wants to slander him or blaspheme him in any way, then I kick on his face with my left foot.

Certain followers of Sri Caitanya speak of Nityananda Prabhu in such a way that although they appear to speak ill of him, they are really praising him. Such exalted Vaishnavas [like Advaita Acarya] are always pure in heart and transcendentally honest. Their seeming disagreement and quarrel is simply lila or sport. If one looks at their disagreement externally and takes the side of one, slandering the other, he will be finished. By followsing only those who deprecate all slander of Nityananda, Sri Caitanya is attained. When will that day be mine when I shall obtain the divine vision of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu, surrounded by the assembly of devotees? May Nityananda Prabhu be my eternal master in every way. Remaining loyal to Nityananda Prabhu, may I serve the holy feet of Sri Gauracandra. May I read the holy Bhagavata at the feet of Nityananda Prabhu birth after birth.

This is my aspiration. All glories to the Supreme Lord, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. You gave us Nityananda Prabhu and you took him away from us. And yet, O Mahaprabhu, grant me this one favor--that my mind may remain always attached to you and to Nityananda Prabhu. He is your greatest devotee; without your consent, no one can attain his lotus feet. Nityananda Prabhu roamed throughout Vrndavana and different holy places until Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu manifest his divinity. Whoever listens to this account of the pilgrimages of Nityananda Prabhu attains the treasure of divine love. Sri Krsna Caitanya is the life and soul of Nityananda Prabhu. Vrindavan Das, praying at

Lives of the Saints
Purushottama dasa Thakura

From the time he was a small boy, Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura was dedicated to constantly meditating on the lotus feet of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. In *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* (C.C. Ādi 11.38—39), Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī has written: "The twenty-third and twenty fourth prominent devotees of Nityānanda Prabhu were Sadāśiva Kavirāja and his son Puruṣottama dāsa, who was the tenth *gopāla*. Since birth, Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura was merged in the service of the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, and he always engaged in childish play with Lord Kṛṣṇa." The *Caitanya-Bhāgavata* records (C.B. Antya 5.741—742): "Sadāśiva Kavirāja was greatly fortunate. His son was named Śrī Puruṣottama dāsa. Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura had no concern for his external body; Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu always resided within the core of his heart.

Śrī Bhaktivedānta Swāmī writes: "Sadāśiva Kavirāja and Nāgara Puruṣottama, who were father and son, are described in the *Caitanya-Bhāgavata* as *mahā-bhāgyavān*, greatly fortunate. They belonged to the *vaidya* caste of physicians. The *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, verse 156, says that Candrāvālī, a most beloved *gopī* of Kṛṣṇa, later took birth as Sadāśiva Kavirāja were great devotees of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura sometimes lived at Sukhasāgara, near the Cākadaha and Śimurāli railway stations. All the Deities installed by Puruṣottama Ṭhākura were formerly situated in Beleḍāṅgā-grāma, but when the temple was destroyed, the Deities were brought to Sukhasāgara. When that temple merged inthe bed of the Ganges, the Deities were brought with Jāhnavā-mātā's Deity to Sāhebaṣāṅgā Beḍigrāma. Since that place also has been destroyed, all the Deities are now situated in the village named Cānduḍegrāma, which is situated one mile up from Pālapāḍā, as referred to above."

Kavirāja Goswāmī remarks about the son of Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura, "Śrī Kānu Ṭhākura, a very respectable gentleman, was the son of Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura. He was such a great devotee that Lord Kṛṣṇa always liked in his body."

Śrī Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura had three principle disciples: Śrī Madhvācarya, Śrī Yādavācārya, and Devakīnandana dāsa. They were from *brahmaṇa* families. Śrī Madhvācārya later became the husband of Nityānanda Prabhu's daughter Gaṅgadevī. Śrī Devakīnandana dāsa was the author of an important book glorifying the lives of different Vaiṣṇavas.

Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura's wife's name was Jāhnavā. She passed away just after bearing Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura's son Kānu. Hearing this news, Nityānanda Prabhu went to the house of Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura and took his son Kānu with him to his

own village of Khaḍadaha. Kānu Ṭhākura was born on the *ratha-yatra* day in the year 1450 Śaka era. Seeing his great devotion, Nityānanda Prabhu gave him the name Śiśu Kṛṣṇadāsa.

When he was five years old, Kānu Ṭhākura was taken to Vṛndāvana by Jāhnavā Mātā. Upon seeing the great devotion of the boy, Jīva Goswāmī and the other Goswāmī's called him Kānāi Ṭhākura. The people say that one day Kānāi Ṭhākura was in Vṛndāvana, dancing in the ecstasy of *kīrtana* and while dancing, a bangle fell from his feet. At that time he said, "At the place where this bangle has fallen I shall make my residence." At present that bangle is kept in a temple in a village called Khānā grāma in the Yaśohara district of Bengal, which is where the original family home of Kānai Ṭhākura was located

The book called *Prema-vilāsa* observes that Kānāi Ṭhākura was present at the great festival of Kheturi-grāma with Śrī Jahnavā Mātā. Just as his father Puruṣottama dāsa Ṭhākura had accepted many disciples from *brahmaṇa* families, so also did Kānāi Ṭhākura.

Shri Raghunandana Thakura

Shri Mukunda Dasa, Shri Madhava Dasa and Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura were three brothers who lived in Shri Khanda. Shri Mukunda Dasa Thakura's son was Shri Raghunandan Thakura. Mukunda Dasa Thakura was the doctor in the court of the muslim king. He was always absorbed in Krishna, whatever work he did.

An example of this is found in what happened to Mukunda Dasa one day when he went to the court of the king to give him some medical advice. The king was seated on an elevated throne. Mukunda Dasa sat before him, a little lower, on a half-elevated seat, and began inquiring about his health. At that time a servant came with a large peacock fan to fan the king. The sight of peacock feathers filled Mukunda with a deep memory of Krishna's pastimes. He fainted. When the king saw Mukunda laying on the ground he was alarmed. He thought, "Is he dead?" Gradually they managed to bring him back to consciousness. The king asked him, "What is the nature of your disease?" Shri Mukunda Dasa replied, "I am not greatly ill." The king asked him the cause of his behavior. Hiding his real ailment (separation from Krishna) from the king, Mukunda told him that he had epilepsy and sometimes fainted. He told him, "It is nothing. Don't worry." Although Mukunda Dasa did his best to hide his devotional sentiments from the king, the king could understand that Mukunda Dasa was a highly elevated soul, a perfected being. With great respect he sent Mukunda Dasa home.

Every year Mukunda Dasa, Madhava Dasa and Narahari Sarakara would go to Jagannatha Puri to take darshan of the holy feet of Shri Chaitanya and to dance and chant in Rathayatra kirtan. One day Chaitanya Mahaprabhu affectionately asked Mukunda Dasa, "Mukunda! Betweend you and Raghunandan, who is the father and who is the son?" Mukunda said, "Raghunandana is my father. Through him I have found Krishna consciousness, so he is really my father." The Lord said, "Your judgement is correct. Whoever gives us Krishna-bhakti is our guru and our father." The Lord ordered Raghunandana to serve the deity, without thinking of anything else.

When he was a boy, Raghunandan used to make the deity eat laddu. Shri Uddhava Dasa has described this subject in a very beautiful way:

prakata shri khandavasa nama shri mukunda das
ghare seva gopinatha jani
gola kon karyanutare seva karibara tare
shri rahunandane daki ani

ghare ache krishna-seva yatna kare khaoyaiba
eta boli mukunda chalila
pitara adesha paiya sevara samagri loiya
gopinather sammukhe aila
shri raghunandana ati vayakrama sishumati
khao bole kandite kandite
krishna se premer vashe na rakhiya avasheshe
sakala khaila alakshita
asiya mukunda dasa kahe balakera pasha
prasada naivedya ano dekhi
shishu kahe vap shuno sakali khailo punah
avashesha kichui na rakhi
shuni aparupa heno vismita hridoye punah
ara dine balake kahiya
seva anumati diya varir bahira hoiya
punah asi rahe lukaiya
shri raghunandana ati hoiya harisha mati
gopinathe laddu diya kare
khao khao bale ghana arddhaka khaite heno
samaye mukunda dekhi dvare
ye khailo rahe heno ara na khaila puna
dekhiya mukunda preme bhora
nandana kariya dole gadgad svare bole
nayane varishe ghana lora
adhyapi shri khandapure ardha laddu ache kare
dekhe yata bhagvyavanta jane
abhinna madana yei shri raghunandana sei
ei uddhava dasa rasa bhane

Shri Raghunandana Thakura made his appearance within this world in Shri Khanda. In his home he became acquainted with the worship of Shri Gopinatha from an early age. One day his father, Mukunda Dasa, who was a doctor, had to go away on medical business. He called Raghunandana to his side. He told Raghunandana to see to it that their deity was served with great care and attention. He told him to be sure and feed the deity. At the appointed hour, taking the order of his father on his head, Raghunandan went to peform the service. He took the offering of food into the deity. Raghunandan was just a little boy. He told

the deity: "Eat! Eat!" When he saw that the offering appeared untouched, he began to cry. Not being able to resist the child's intense devotion, Krishna ate everything on the plate, leaving no remnants.

When Mukunda Dasa returned, he asked the boy, "Bring me the prasada remnants of the offering you made earlier." The boy said, "Father, listen. I made the deity eat as you told me to. He left no remnants. He ate everything on his plate." Mukunda was amazed at what the child was saying. Ordering the boy to offer food as before, Mukunda hid himself outside the house and watched through the window. Raghunandana, then, with great delight, offered Gopinatha a laddu. "Eat! Eat!" he said. The Lord ate half the laddu. Meanwhile, Mukunda, who was watching from outside, beheld all this in great amazement. He could understand that since the deity had already eaten once, and had not left any remnants, his hunger was satisfied. As a result, he could only finish half the laddu.

He embraced his son and held him on his lap. His voice was choked with divine emotion. Tears poured from his eyes like rain from a thundercloud. It is said that even today that half a laddu may be seen in Shri Khanda, where it is kept in one of the temples there.

For the pleasure of that great devotee whose bodily beauty resembles that of Cupid himself, Uddhava Dasa narrates this story.

The great devotee Shri Abhirama Gopala Thakura and Shri Raghunandan Thakura once danced together in Krishna prema in the house of a devotee in Boro-Dangita. Shri Raghunandana Thakura's nupura, or ankle-bracelet, opened while he was dancing and fell into a pond in Akai-hatta. From that time on, the pond has been known as Nupura-kunda. It is said that at present, in the town of Akaihatta, south of Boro-grama that *nupura* may be seen in a temple maintained by the local devotees.

According to certain authorities, Shri Raghunandana Thakura was Kandarpa Mañjari. According to others, he was one of Krishna's sons in Dvaraka whose name was Kandarpa. This is on the basis of Kavi Karnapura's Gaura-Ganodesha-dipika.

Raghunandana Thakura had a son named Kanai Thakura. The descendants Kan of Raghunandan Thakura's line live today in Shri Khanda. One of the most famous of them is a person by the name of Panchanana Kaviraja, who was born in the line of Shri Raghunandana. Raghunandana Thakura was born in the Saka year 1432.

Quoting from Shrila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's commentary on Chaitanya Charitamrita, Bhaktivedanta Swami writes: "Shri Mukunda dasa was the son of Narayana dasa and eldest brother of Narahari Sarakara. His second brother's name was Madhava dasa, and his son was named Raghunandana dasa. Descendents of Raghunandana dasa still live four miles west of Katwa in the village named Shri Khanda, where Raghunandana dasa used to live. Raghunandana had one son named Kanai, who had two sons—Madana Raya, who was a disciple of Narahari Sarakara Thakura, and Vamshivadana. It is estimated that at least four hundred men descended in this dynasty. All their names are recorded in the village known as Shri Khanda. In the Gaura-ganoddesha-dipikca it is stated that the gopi whose name was Vrindadevi became Mukunda dasa, lived in Shri Khanda village and was very dear to Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. His wonderful love and devotion for Krishna are described in the Madhya-lila, Chapter Fifteen of the Chaitanya Charitamrita. It is stated in the Bhakti-Ratnakara, Chapter Eight, that Raghunandana used to serve a Deity of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

The Lives of the Saints
Raghunatha Bhatta

daṇḍa praṇāma kari bhaṭṭa paḍilā caraṇe
prabhu raghunātha bali kailā āliṅgane

"Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa fell straight as a rod at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Then the Lord embraced him, knowing full well who he was." (*Caitanya Caritāmṛta Antya* 13.101)

From Kāśīdhāma, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa traveled on foot to Purī-dhāma. When he arrived in Purī, he went straight to the place of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and offered his respects at the Lord's lotus feet. At that time, the Lord embraced him, saying "Raghunātha!" Having been embraced by the Lord, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa found that all his troubles went far away. Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa thought to himself, "I am coming to see the Lord after such a long time; He didn't know that I was coming. How is it that he is showing me so much affection? He has many devotees who are very dear to Him. Why should he show such affection for one such as myself, the lowest of devotees?" And yet, although he considered himself very low and mean, when Caitanya Mahāprabhu with a laughing, smiling, face said "Raghunātha!" and embraced him, Raghunātha began crying tears of ecstasy. With tears in his eyes, he fell at the Lord's feet and, holding them, said,. "O most merciful Lord. In truth, tell me, why are you giving such great consideration to this humble one?" The Lord said, "Raghunāha! I cannot forget your parent's affectionate consideration for me around the time of your birth. Every day, with great affection, they used to feed me."

After this, Caitanya Mahāprabhu introduced Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa to all the devotees. All the devotees were very happy to meet him. On behalf of his parents, Raghunātha gave regards and affectionate obeisances to all the devotees. He also gave them news of Candraśekhara and all the other devotees of East Bengal. Finally the affectionate mother of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa had sent some nice things for the Lord to eat, Bengali delicacies neatly packed in special bags. When the Lord saw them, he was very happy and ordered his servant Govinda to carefully put them away.

Śrī Raghunāha Bhaṭṭa's father's name was Śrī Tapana Miśra. In his *gṛhastha-līlā*, the Lord once went to East Bengal, to the Padma river, where he was a visiting professor of grammar. There he met with Tapana Miśra and made his acquaintance. Tapana Miśra was an Eastern Bengali and was a pandit in the *śāstra*. Still, although He had given great

consideration to both the practice of perfection and the perfection of life, he was unable to ascertain their inner meaning. One night he had a dream, and in his dream a god came before him and said, "Miśra! Don't worry. Śrī Nimai Pandita has just arrived near hear. He will teach you both the practice of perfection and the goal of life. He is not a man (*nara*)—he is the Supreme Lord, Nara-Nārāyaṇa. Although He is the creator of the universe, he has accepted the form of a man in order to deliver the world." Saying this, the god disappeared.

The following morning, after finishing his morning duties, Tapana Miśra set out to find Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Just then he saw Śrī Nimai Paṇḍita sitting on the bench before his home, His brilliant effulgence illuminating his courtyard as if the sun had descended before him. His eyes were just like fresh lotuses, and his fine black hair was beautifully curled and flowing. His strong chest was decorated with a fine sacred thread and he wore a garment of brilliant yellow. Just as a shining moon in the midst of many stars illuminating all four directions, his effulgent form was surrounded by his disciples.

Tapana Miśra offered his obeisances to the Lord, falling at his holy feet, and said, "O most merciful one! I am most fallen. Please be merciful to me." The Lord smiled affectionately, and offering him a seat, asked Tapana Miśra to introduce himself. Having introduced himself, Tapana Miśra inquired from the Lord about all the truths regarding the practice of perfection and the goal of life.

Mahāprabhu said, "In every millenium the Lord advents himself in order to deliver the fallen souls and instruct them in the appropriate form of worship for each age. In Satya-yuga, meditation, in Treta-yuga, sacrifice, in Dvāpara-yuga, deity worship and in Kali-yuga, saṅkīrtana is the process for attaining the ultimate salvation. In each of the four ages there is a particular process for deliverance. In the age of Kali, this form of dharma is *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

In this way, the Lord in his form as a spiritual teacher informed Tapana Miśra about the real welfare for the soul as well as the true position of dharma in the age of Kali—that is, *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. He explained that apart from the holy name, nothing else will be fruitful.

He said, "In the age of Kali the sacrifice of the holy name is the essential principle. Nothing else will be effective in the age of Kali, and therefore there is no religious principle superior to this. Without the holy name there is no way to attain perfection in this age. One should completely renounce any tendency to follow any other path and always take to the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa as follows: 'Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.' By the influence of this mantra you will be able to understand everything about the means towards perfection and

the goal of life, since there is no difference between the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself."

Tapana Miśra, upon hearing the the instructions of the Lord offered his obeisances at the Lord's feet with all his limbs prostrated upon the ground. When the Lord was about to leave for Nabadwīpa, he wanted to accompany the Lord on His return journey to Nabadwipa. The Lord, however, ordered him, "Soon you will go to Kaśī. There we shall again meet. At that time I shall instruct you further in all these truths." Saying this, the Lord set out for Nabadwīpa." Soon thereafter, Tapana Miśra and his wife left for Kaśīdhāma, which is also called Bāranasi or Benares.

Some years later, out of his mercy for the fallen souls, Mahāprabhu took sannyāsa and went to reside in Jagannātha Purī on the order of his mother. After staying there for some months, he went through the Jharikhaṇḍa forest (presently known as Choḍa Nāgapura) on his way to Vṛndāvana and passed through Kāśīdhāma. At the bathing ghāṭa called Maṇikarṇikā he began chanting the holy name of Hari and exhorted everyone else to do so, saying, "Haribol! Haribol!"

Just at that time, Tapana Miśra was taking bath at that very ghāṭa. Hearing the holy name of Hari being chanted so loudly, he was astonished. It was like finding an ocean in the middle of a desert to hear the glories of Hari being chanted in the midst of the capitol of the Māyāvādis, Kāśīdhāma. He looked across the ghāṭa and saw that on the banks of the bathing ghāṭa stood a sannyāsī of unprecedented beauty and stature. His supernatural effulgence illuminated all four directions. In complete amazement, Tapana Miśra thought to himself, "Who is this great personality? Could it possibly be Nimai Pandit of Nabadwipa? I have heard that he has taken sannyāsa. Could it be him? He got out of the water and looked more closely. At that time, as he looked across the water, he was certain that it was indeed Nimai Pandita. He hurried to the place where the Lord stood and offered his obeisances at the lotus feet of the Lord as joy arose within his heart. As he picked himself up from the ground, he found himself being embraced by Caitanya Mahārabhu. After so many days he had finally met the Lord again.

With great affection, Tapana Miśra brought the Lord to his home. There he washed the Lord's lotus feet and then drank that holy water along with his family. His ecstasy knew no bounds. He placed his little son Raghunātha at the lotus feet of the Lord and made him offer obeisances. The Lord took the boy upon his lap and cradled him there with great affection. Meanwhile, Tapana Miśra quickly made arrangements for cooking, and Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya cooked. He made arrangements for the Lord's bath, and when the Lord had finished bathing and performing his noon duties, the Lord ate. Tapana Miśra's little son Raghunātha massaged the Lord's feet, and the Lord took rest.

Hearing news of the Lord's arrival, Candraśekhara and the Mahārāṣṭhrian *brahmaṇa*, as well as the other devotees came to offer their respects to the Lord's holy feet. The Lord embraced Çandraśkhara and then spoke some *kṛṣṇa-kathā* with all the devotees present. While he was in Benares, the Lord visited the temples of Viśveśvara and Bindhu-mādhava to take darshan. He also visited the Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa. The Lord stayed at the house of Candraśekhara and dined at the house of Tapana Miśra. Candraśekhara worked as a scribe, copying scriptures for the paṇḍitas of Kāśi with his own hand, in a beautiful style of calligraphy. He was from a family of highly learned *brahmaṇas*.

In Benares, the slogans of the impersonalits like "*tat tvam asi*," and "*aham brahmāsmi*" as well as the favorite words of the impersonalists—words like "Brahma," "*ātmā*," and "*caitanya*"—were constantly heard everywhere. No devotional words could be heard in Benares, and so wherever the Lord went, he performed *saṅkīrtana*. One day, the Mahārāṣṭhrian *brahmaṇa* submitted a request at the Lotus feet of the Lord. "O Lord," he said, O Lord! Please deliver this city of Kāśī. I met with the guru of the *sannyāsīs*, Prakāśananda Saraswatī, and three times I mentioned your name, "Kṛṣṇa Caitanya." He also said the word "*caitanya*" three times, but he was unable to say the word "*kṛṣṇa*" at all. The Lord replied, "Because they are offenders at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, the holy name of Kṛṣṇa never issues forth from their lips. The holy name and form of Kṛṣṇa are no different from his very Self. They are one transcendental truth, full in ecstasy and divine reality." Having thus instructed the devotees in various ways, the Lord set out once again to continue his long journey to Vṛndāvana. He would deliver Kāśi with the mercy of Kṛṣṇa later, on his return journey to Jagannātha Puri. And so the Lord went to Vṛndāvana.

After spending some time in Vṛndāvana wandering about in the ecstasy of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, by and by the Lord returned to Kāśī-dhāma. One day, he met with Prakāśananda Saraswatī himself. Seeing the Lord's uncommon beauty, childlike humility, his generosity and magnanimity, Prakāśānanda was astonished. At length he fell at the Lord's lotus feet. After the conversion of Prakāśānanda Saraswati, all the *sannyāsīs* there also fell at the Lord's feet and sang his greatness, as the Lord delivered everyone there with the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. The flood of nectar flowing from the holy name soon inundated Kāśī, and washed away the false doctrine of impersonalism along with its followers.

This time the Lord spent ten days in Kāśī, and the joy of his devotees and followers knew no bounds. Tapana Miśra, Candraśekhara, and the Mahārāṣṭhrian *brahmaṇa*, as well as the other devotees there felt as if their life had returned, as again they had the opportunity to render personal service to Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Tapana Miśra's son, Raghunātha felt himself supremely fortunate to be able to serve his Lord and master, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu for ten days.

At last, the time came for the Lord to bid farewell to the devotees so that he might once again set out for Jagannātha Purī. All the devotees were heartbroken in agony at the prospect of separation from the Lord. Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, the son of Tapana Miśra, fell before the Lord, begging him not to go and held his lotus feet, weeping again and again. The Lord took the boy upon his lap and gave him many reassurances, trying to console him. He said, "You must serve your father and mother here, and by and by, you may come to Purī-dhāma and see me again." Then, after first embracing Tapana Miśra and Candraśekhara and instructing the devotees there in certain truths of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu bade farewell to Kāśī forever, and began his long journey by foot to Jagannātha Purī.

Within a short time, Śrī Raghunāha became expert in Sanskrit grammar, rhetoric, and poetry. Gradually, he became highly learned in the revealed scriptures. He continued to serve his mother and father into their old age, as the years passed. When he came of age, Raghunātha was ordered by his father to go to Purī-dhāma to see Śrī Caitanya Mahārabhu. Raghunātha's ecstasy had no boundaries. In service to the Lord, Raghunātha's mother had prepared various kinds of delicacies to be offered to Him by Raghunātha on behalf of the Miśra's. All these fine delicacies had been carefully packed together in a big sack.

After recieving the orders and blessings of his parents, Raghunātha left with a servant for Purī. On the road, he met a Rāma-bhakta, a devotee of Rāma, who joined him in traveling to Purī. His name was Śrī Rāma dāsa. By birth he was a Kayastha, that is he took birth in caste of those who work in the service of the King. He was a highly learned scholar in the interpretation of that great epic, the Rāmāyaṇa. Rāma dāsa bowed down before Raghunātha and took the dust of his lotus feet. He then snatched the sack of delicacies from Raghunātha's servant and began to carry it on his head.

Raghunātha said, "You are a learned scholar, and what are doing?" Rāma dāsa said; "Bhaṭṭajī! I am the lowest of *śudras*. It will do me some good to serve a *brahmaṇa*." Raghunātha replied, "Panditji! Please. I beg of you, let my servant carry that heavy sack." At this, Rāma dāsa surrendered the work of carrying the sack to Raghunātha's servant. On the way to Jagannātha Purī, Raghunātha dāsa discussed many scriptural conclusions with Rāma dāsa.

Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa arrived in Jagannātha Purī and offered his obeisances at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. At that time the Lord, greeted him saying, "Raghunātha!" He picked him up from the ground and embraced him. The Lord inquired about the welfare of Tapana Miśra and his wife, and asked about Candraśekhara as well as all the other devotees in Benares. Raghunātha dāsa related all this to him and told him

everything. Śrī Rāma dāsa was brought to the place of Mahāprabhu. Śrī Rāma dāsa offered his obeisances to the lotus feet of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, but the Lord, who is the Supersoul within all living beings, detected that Rāma dāsa was maintaining desires for liberation within his heart. As a result, the Lord was not affectionate towards him.

The Lord ordered Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa to go see the deity of Lord Jagannātha after bathing in the ocean. Raghunātha went with the other devotees to the beach, where they all took bath in the ocean and then went to see Lord Jagannātha. Afterwards, he returned to the Lord's place, and Mahāprabhu ordered his servant Govinda to give prasāda to Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa. The Lord took care to see to Raghunātha's food and lodgings, and there Raghunātha stayed. Raghunātha would cook for the Lord on a regular basis. He stayed in Jagannātha Purī for eight months in the service of the Lord and thus experienced great happiness. He witnessed for himself the ecstatic singing and dancing of the Lord in various moods of divine ecstasy before the ratha-yatra car of Lord Jagannātha. After some time, Mahāprabhu ordered him to return to Kāśī. 'He told Raghunātha to see to the service of his aging father and mother, and explained to him that, as they were Vaiṣṇavas, they were not to be neglected. Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa took this order of the Lord very seriously, and the Lord began to instruct him on many other points. He ordered Raghunātha not to marry, and told him to study the *śāstra*. He told him that after some time he should again return to Jagannātha Purī to see the deity of Jagannātha.

With this, Mahāprabhu gave him a *tulasī* garland from his own neck. The Lord also gave Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa some *mahāprasāda* to be distributed among all the devotees associated with Tapana Miśa and Candraśekhara in Kāśī. When it came time to say goodbye, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa's heart ached. He fell at the lotus feet of Mahāprabhu, offering his prostated obeisances. The Lord helped Raghunātha to his feet and gave him a hearty embrace, just as before. Bidding farewell to Mahāprabhu and Jagannātha Purī, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa started on his way back to Kāśī.

Upon his return to Kāśī, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa served his parents carefully, and began studying the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in earnest. After some time his mother and father passed away. Raghunātha, adhering strictly to the orders of Śrī Caitanya, had never married. Without any family responsibilities to burden him any longer, he went to Jagannātha Purī to the lotus feet of the Lord. When the Lord again saw Raghunātha after such a long time, he was very happy. Hearing of the passing away of Tapana Miśra and his devoted wife, Caitanya Mahāprabhu spoke of their great devotion at length, and glorified them. Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa was very happy to once again have the association of the Lord. He remained in Purī and served Mahāprabhu faithfully for another eight months. One day the Lord told him, "You must go to Vṛndāvana. You have much work to do there in

Vṛndāvana. I must stay here in Purī, for I have been ordered by my mother to do so. As a result I cannot finish the work I have to do in Vṛndāvana. It is up to you to help me finish my work there."

Upon hearing these words from the Lord, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa was sorrowful at the prospect of having to leave Him again. The Lord explained to him that in Vṛndāvana he would meet Rūpa and Sanātana Goswāmī. He was to study the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and related revealed scriptures under their guidance. On the Lord's order, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa prepared to leave for Vṛndāvana. He bid adieu to the Vaiṣṇavas and fell before the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu for the last time. As Mahāprabhu was saying goodbye to Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, he gave him a long prasāda garland and some *tambula mahāprasāda* and embraced him.

Having bid goodbye, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa set out on the same path to Vṛndāvana that once was traversed by the lotus feet of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In this way, as he walked along the long road to Vṛndāvana, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa would hear again and again of how the Lord passed on the same road. He would hear of the Lord's glories, and how he visited the different holy places and performed various wonderful activities.

When he finally arrived in Vṛndāvana, Rūpa and Sanātana Goswāmī were very happy to see him and affectionately embraced him. All the Goswāmīs who stayed in Vṛndāvana with them were overjoyed to see him. They all accepted him as their affectionate godbrother. Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa was exceptionally blessed with humility and meekness. It is recorded in *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* that Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa would recite *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* before Rūpa and Sanātana Goswāmī, and when doing so, he would be overwhelmed with ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. By the Lord's mercy he would be overcome by all the symptoms of ecstatic love of Godhead: tears, choking of the voice, and trembling. etc. Overwhelmed in this way, he would not be able to continue the reading. It is said that his voice was as sweet as a cuckoo's, and when reading the *Bhāgavata*, he would sing the verses in many different tunes, or *rāgas*. In this way, his readings were especially sweet to hear.

Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa was fully surrendered to the lotus feet of Gaura-govinda. Those lotus feet were his life and soul. After some time in Vṛndāvana, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa arranged for his disciples to construct a temple for Govinda. He prepared various ornaments for Govinda, including a flute and shark-shaped earrings. Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa would neither hear nor speak about anything material. He would simply discuss Kṛṣṇa and worship the Lord day and night. He would not listen to blasphemy of a Vaiṣṇava, nor would he listen to talk of a Vaiṣṇava's misbehavior. He knew only that everyone was engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service; he did not understand anything else. When Raghunātha was

absorbed in remembering the Lord, he wouldtake the tulasī garland and the prasāda of Jagannātha given him by Mahāprabhu, bind them together and wear them on his neck.

Regarding the spiritual position of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, the *Gaura-gaṇodeśa-dipikā* states, "In the Vṛndāvana *lila* of Kṛṣṇa Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa was Śrī Rāga Mañjarī." Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī was born in 1505 A.D. He passed away from this earth and entered into the transcendental world in 1579 A.D.

Lives of the Saints
Ramchandra Kaviraja

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has sung: "*dayā koro śrī ācārya prabhu śrīnivāsa, rāmacandra saṅga māge narottama dāsa*—O Śrīnivāsa Ācārya Prabhu, kindly have mercy upon me; Narottama dāsa always prays for the association of Rāmacandra Kavirāja."

Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja was one of the internal associates of Narottama Ṭhākura. The two of them were practically inseparable. Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja had obtained the full mercy and blessings of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya. Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja's father's name was Cirañjīva Sena—his mother's name was Śrī Sunandā. At first Śrī Cirañjīva Sen lived in Kumāra Nagara. After he married the daughter of the poet Śrī Dāmodara Kavi, he moved to the village of Śrī Khaṇḍa. Cirañjīva Sen was a *Mahābhagavata*, a topmost devotee of the Lord. The devotees of Śrī Khaṇḍa, headed by Narahari Sarakāra Ṭhākura all had great affection and respect for Cirañjīva.

Cirañjīva is mentioned in *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* by Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī as follows (CC *Madhya* 11.92): "Gopīnātha Ācārya continued to point out the devotees [to Prataparudra Mahārāja]. 'Here is Śuklāmbara. See, there is Śrīdhara. Here is Vijaya, and there is Vallabha Sena. Here is Puruṣottama, and there is Sañjaya. And here are all the residents of Kulīna-grāma, such as Satyarāja Khān and Rāmānanda. Indeed, all of them are present here. Please see. Here are Mukunda dāsa, Narahari, Śrī Raghunandana, Ciranjīva and Sulocana, all residends of Khaṇḍa. How many names shall I speak to you? All the devotees you see here are associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is their life and soul.' The King said, 'Upon seeing all these devotees, I am much astonished, for I have never seen such an effulgence. Indeed their effulgence is like the brilliance of a million suns. Nor have I ever heard the Lord's names chanted so melodiously.'"

Mukunda dāsa, Narahari, Śrī Raghunandana, and Ciranjīva all lived in Khaṇḍa. They were as one; for their aim in life was the same, and every year at the time of the Ratha-yatra festival they used to go to Jagannātha Purī dhāma to take *darśan* of the holy feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to take part in the *kīrtana* and behold his wonderful dancing and chanting.

Ciranjīva Sen took birth in a *vaidya* family, that is, within the doctor caste. His two sons were Śrī Rāmacandra and Śrī Govinda. These two sons were great jewels. Both of them attained the mercy of Śrīnivāsa Ācāraya Prabhu, after which they went to live in Teliya-budhari-grāma. Budhari-grāma is in the Murśidabād district.

Rāmacandra Kavirāja was especially enthusiastic, earnest, persevering, energetic, intelligent, and beautiful. His maternal grandfather was Śrī Dāmodara Kavirāja, who was famous as a great poet. He used to instruct people in the philosophy of the *śaktas*. He was also initiated into the path of *dharma* followed by the *śaktas*.

After the passing away of their father, Cirañjīva, Śrī Rāmacandra and Śrī Govinda went to live at the place of their grandfather Dāmodara Kavirāja. As they were living with their scholarly grandfather, who was a follower of *śakta*-ism, they too gradually became infected with this anti-devotional philosophy, even though their father had been a great *mahābhagavata* devotee and personal associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Rāmacandra Sen became a doctor and gradually he became famous as a highly learned poet as well.

One day, Rāmacandra Kavirāja was on the road to Yajigrāma, on his way home from his wedding. At that time, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya was passing on the road, accompanied by his followers.

One day Shrinivasa Acharaya was in Yajigrama at his own house, where many devotees had gathered to hear him lecture on Shrimad-Bhagavatam. At that time, passing by the house of Shrinivasa Acharya was Ramachandra Kaviraja the son of Chiranjiva Sen (one of Mahaprabhu's eternal associates). He had just been married, and he and his new bride were on their way back from the wedding.

From a long way off, Shrinivasa Acharya saw Ramachandra Kaviraja, and Ramachandra Kaviraja also saw Shrinvasa Acharya from a distance. Upon seeing each other from a distance a deep mood of friendship arose within the hearts of those two eternally perfect devotees of Shri Gauranga. After seeing each other they were eager to meet one another. Shrinivasa Acharya inquired about Ramachandra Kaviraja from the local people. They told him that he was a great paṇḍita named Rāmacandra—a learned poet and expert doctor from a family of doctors and scholars. Hear all this, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya smiled, for he was greatly pleased.

Ramachandra Kaviraja had heard about Shrinivasa Acharya and was eager to have his darśana. In this way, he finally went to the house of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya along with his new bride and were introduced by some of the local people. The day passed quickly in discussion of Hari-kathā. They spent the night where they had been staying since coming to Yajigrama, at a brahmana's house near the home of Shrinvasa Acharaya, and the following morning went to Shrinivasa Acharya and fell before his feet offering prostrated obeisances.

The Acharya bade Ramachandra Kaviraja to get up from the ground, and heartily embraced him saying, "Life after life you have been my friend. Providence has brought us together again today by arranging our meeting." Both of them felt great happiness as a

result of their having met. Seeing that Ramchandra had an acute and deeply learned transcendental intelligence, Shrinivasa was very happy. He began to make him hear the Goswami scriptures. Rāmacandra's pure behavior which was always in accordance with the scriptures very much pleased Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, and after a few days the Acharya initiated him in the divine Radha-Krishna mantra.

After a few days, Rāmacandra Kavirāja left Yajigrāma and returned to his own village. At that time, the local *śaktas* became envious of him, seeing that he had been initiated into the Vaiṣṇava faith. Rāmacandra Kavirāja always marked his body with the twelve *tilāka* marks of a devotee and always chanted the holy name of Hari.

One day, after having taken his bath in the Ganges, Rāmacandra Kavirāja was on his way home when the *śaktas* confronted him saying, "Kavirāja! Why don't you worship Śiva? Your grandfather Damodāra Kavirāja was a great devotee of Śiva, so why have you given up his worship?"

Rāmacandra said, "Both Śiva and Brahmā are *guṇa-avataras*, qualitative incarnations of the Lord, but Kṛṣṇa is the root of all *avatāras*, all incarnations. Simply by worshiping Kṛṣṇa all worship is performed, just as by watering the root of a tree, all the leaves and branches are automatically nourished. Prahlāda, Dhruva, Vibhiṣana and others who were dear devotees of Kṛṣṇa are always glorified by Brahmā and Śiva. On the other hand Rāvana, Kumbhakarṇa, Vānasura, and others were envious of Kṛṣṇa and were solely devoted to Śiva. But because they were envious of Kṛṣṇa, Śiva himself saw to their destruction.

"When Brahmā creates the universe, He prays to Viṣṇu for success in the matter of creation. And Śiva also submits himself to Lord Viṣṇu by carrying upon his head the Ganges, the water that has washed the lotus feet of Viṣṇu and that sanctifies the three worlds."

Hearing all this, the *smārta brahmaṇas*, the materialistic worshipers of Śiva known as the *śaktas* were speechless.

Gradually, Rāmacandra Kavirāja became eager to go to Vṛndāvana and take *darśana* of the holy feet of the Goswāmīs there. After receiving permission and blessings from various Vaiṣṇavas in Bengal, including Śrī Raghunandana Ṭhākura, he set out for Vṛndāvana on an auspicious day. On the way to Vṛndāavana, he vistied Gayā, Kāśī, Prayāga, and many other holy places. At long last he arrived in Mathurā. There bathed in the Yamunā at Viśrama ghata, and after bathing, he rested for some time. He took *darśana* of the Ādi Keśava deity at the birthplace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and then continued on his way to Vṛndāvana.

At that time, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya was staying in Vṛndāvana. Arriving there, Rāmacandra Kavirāja offered his obeisances at the lotus feet of Śrī Jīva Goswāmī and Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and gave the devotees there the auspicious news about all the devotees in Bengal. On the order of Jīva Goswāmī, Rāmacandra Kavirāja went to visit the three principal deities of Vṛndāvana: Śrī Madana-Mohan, Śrī Govinda, and Śrī Gopīnātha, as well as the memorial shrine or *samādhi* of Sanātana Goswāmī. He took *darśana* of the holy feet of the principle Goswāmīs residing in Vṛndāvana at the time, including Śrī Lokanātha Goswāmī, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī, and Śrī Bhugarbha Goswāmī. Seeing Rāmacandra's wonderful expertise in composing beautiful verses glorifying Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they gave him the title "Kavirāja," in recognition of his scholarship.

After staying in Vṛndāvana for some time under the guidance of those great souls, and after visiting the important holy places, Rāmacandra was ordered by the Goswāmīs to return to Bengal. Arriving in Bengal, he passed through Śrī Khaṇḍa, Yājigrāma, Khaḍadaha, Ambikā Kālnā, and other famous Vaiṣṇava centers, before arriving in Nabadwīpa, where he visited Māyāpura. There he went to the ancient house of Jagannātha Miśra, where he found Mahāprabhu's old family servant, Īśana Ṭhākura. After introducing himself, he took the dust from the holy feet of Īśana and prayed for his blessings, which he received. Rāmacandra Kavirāja was extremely dear to Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, and for this reason, Narottama Ṭhākura considered Rāmacandra Kavirāja to be his life and soul. A discussion of their pastimes together is found in the chapter on Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja delivered many sinners and nonbelievers to a life of auspiciousness as a result of his mercy. At the festival in Kheturi-grāma, he was one of the leaders. On the order of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīnivāsa Ācārya he again went to Vṛndāvana. When he arrived there, he found that almost all the Goswāmīs had passed away. When he found that so many great souls had passed away, his heart was deeply pained. After some days in Vṛndāvana, feeling the pain of separation in this way, while deeply meditating upon the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā and Govinda, he entered into their eternal Vṛndāvana pastimes. His disappearance day is on the third day of the dark moon in the month of Pauṣa.

Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja's disciple was Śrī Harināma Ācārya. Rāmacandra Kavirāja composed many beautiful verses in glorification of Śrī Gaurāṅga. The following song is an example of one of the many prayers composed by Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja. In this song he glorifies the inconceivable transcendental mercy of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu who descended to save all souls in the dense darkenss of the age of Kali; here he also

expresses his deep Vaiṣṇava humility, by lamenting that he was unable to taste even a drop of the Lord's mercy.

Song by Rāmacandra Kavirāja

dekha dekha āre bhāi gaurāṅga cāṅda parakāśa
pūrṇimāra cāṅda yena udita ākāśa
siṁharāśi paurṇamāsī gaura avatāra
chāḍala yuger bhāra dharaṇī nistāra
mahītale āchaye yateka jīvatāpa
harala sakala pahuṅ nijahi pratāpa
kaliyuge tapa-japa nāhi kona tantra
prakāśila mahāpratu hare-kṛṣṇa mantra
premera vādara kari bharila saṁsāra
pātakī nārakī saba paila nistāra
andha avadhi yata kare parakāśa
bindu na paḍila mukhe rāmacandra dāsa.

"Just see! Just see, brothers how Śrī Gaurāṅga has arisen like a golden moon. Just as the full moon had arisen in the sky, another, fuller moon arose in the form of the Gaura *avatāra*, just to deliver us all from this dark age of ignorance.

His mercy takes away all the suffering of the *jīva* souls. *Japa*, *mantras*, austerities and other rituals are all useless for purification in the age of Kali. The only means of deliverance is the *hare kṛṣṇa mantra*. Mahāprabhu is so kind that he has manifest the nectar of the holy name, so that the souls in this dark age can be released from the cycle of repeated birth and death and a hellish life in the lower planetary systems and experience divine love.

Whether one is blind or dumb does not matter; everyone one can drown in this inundation. In this way Caitanya Mahāprabhu has drowned everyone in love of Godhead, but Rāmacandra dāsa is so unfortunate that he could not taste even a drop of that nectar.

Shri Rasikananda Dev

In the Christian year 1590, on the 18th day of the month of Karttika, on the night of the Diwali festival, Shri Rasikananda dev took birth within this world. His father, Raja Shri Achyutadev was the zamindara of a place which was known as Rayani or Rohini. He had been sonless for a long time, and felt that by the grace of the Lord of the Universe, he had finally got a jewel of a son. Shri Rasikananda's other name was Murari. When his son Murari was a young man, Raja Achyutananda arranged for his wedding. Shri Rasikananda's wife's name was Shri Shyamadasi. He was as beautiful as he was learned, and in scholarship he was accomplished in all his subjects. After some time he became anxious to take shelter of the lotus feet of a bonafide guru. One day, he heard a voice in the sky say, "Don't worry. You will go to the place of Shyamananda Prabhu and take initiation, becoming his disciple." The voice in the sky told him not to worry, and advised him to go quickly to the great devotee named Shyamananda and take shelter of his lotus feet. Right after this, Shri Rasikananda started out on the road to Shyamananda's place.

Soon after this, from Dharenda-Bahadur-pura, Shyamanda Prabhu was on his way to the village of Rohini, accompanied by many devotees. Rasikananda could see that his dreams were coming true; he could see a great devotee coming down the road and immediately understood that it was Shyamananda. The acharya had an unparalleled bodily effulgence, and Rasikananda could see that he was always overwhelmed with gaura-krishna-rasa, tasting the mellows of devotion to Shri Krishna and Shri Chaitanya. Shyamananda Prabhu's eyes were filled with tears of divine love. In his hand, he held a beautiful japa-mala, upon which he counted the names of Krishna that he was constantly chanting. Shri Rasikananda fell down before him, offering eightfold prostrated obeisances. At that time, he cordinally invited Rasikananda to come to the King's own compound. There he washed the lotus feet of Shayamanda Prabhu, and worshiped the acharya with fragrant incesnes and flowers. At that time, Rasikananda offered his family, his children, and himself to the lotus feet of Shri Shyamananda Prabhu. On an auspicious day, Shri Shyamanda Prabhu gave initiation in the Radha-Krishna mantra to Rasikananda Prabhu and his wife.

After receiving initiation from Shri Shyamananda Prabhu, Rasikananda traveled for some time with his gurudeva, always remaining close to his lotus feet. He was the most intimate disciple of Shyamanda Prabhu.As a consequence, when

the deities in Gopijana-vallabha-pura were installed, Shyamananda Prabhu entrusted Rasikananda Prabhu with the responsibility of taking care of the deities. From that time on, Rasikananda Prabhu accepted that responsibility with great care and became complete absorbed in the service of the deities there. The devotees were enchanted and captivated by his unprecedented service to the deities, which increased their divine beauty and pleasure. After establishing the worship on a sound footing, he preached the message of Gaura and Nityananda far and wide. By his influence many agnostics and atheists became gaura-nityananda-bhaktas.

Bhakti Ratnakara says, "Rasikananda's preaching was greatly influential; by his mercy many dacoits, blasphemers, demons, and nonbelievers were delivered. By his mercy, the jewel of bhakti was bestowed even upon Yavanas, Muslims, and untouchable outcastes of all description. He went from town to town with his followers, making many disciples and engaging them in Krishna's service. He even made the wild elephants his disciples, and engaged them in the service of Krishna and dn the Vaishnavas. Shri Rasikananda delivered many yavanas and mlechhas. One cannot count how many houses he visited on his preaching tour, or how many souls were delivered. Rasikanananda was almost like a madman, always absorbed in the holy name of Krishna, in nam-sankirtan. Everyone was astonished even to hear his wonderful qualities sung."

In summary, Rasikananda Prabhu, by his mercy, delivered many untouchables, outcastes, meateaters, muslims, atheists, and agnostics. The King of Mayur-bhanj, Raja Vaidyanatha Bhanj, as well as the king of Patashapur, Raja Gajapati, as well as the King of Mayana, Chandrabhanu and many other pious royal personages also took shelter at the lotus feet of Rasikananda Prabhu. The especially wicked Zamindara, Bhima, the yavana Suva Ahmed, and the atheist Shrikara, as well as many other persons gave up their evil ways and took shelter at the lotus feet of Shri Rasikananda Prabhu. He made wild elephants in the jungle chant the holy name of Gopal Krishna. He made tigers give up their mentality of being cruel beasts of prey, and converted them to Krishna-bhakti.

Shri Rasikananda Dev, on the order of his guru Shyamananda Prabhu preached for nearly fourty-six years the message of Shri Gaurachandra. After this, at Remuna, he entered into the eternal lila of the Lord at the lotus feet of Gopinatha. In the year 1578 of the Shaka era, corresponding to the year 1652 of the Christian era, Shri Rasikananda Dev, from Sarata Grama, went to Remuna and in the association of the devotees there, after speaking some Krishna-katha, in which he instructed

everyone to always worship Krishna, he entered the Gopinath temple, and touching the lotus feet of Shri Gopinath, he passed away.

Shri Rasikananda had three sons: Shri Radhananda, Shri Krishna Govinda, and Shri Radha Krishna. Some of his descendants of currently reside in present day Gopijana-vallabha-pura. Shri Rasikananda Prabhu has written a few books, notably a biography of Shyamananda Prabhu called the Shri Shyamananda Shataka. His other works include the Shrimad-bhagavat-ashtaka as well as different collections of verses, prayers and songs.

Lives of the Saints

Sanatana Goswami

The transcendental position of Sanatana Goswami is glorified in the Gaura-Ganodesha-Dipika of Shri Kavi Karnapura (181):

sā rūpa-mañjarī-preṣṭhā
purāsīd rati-mañjarī
socyate nāma-bhedena
lavaṅga-mañjarī budhaiḥ

"Rupa Manjari's closest friend, who was known by the names Rati-Manjari and Lavanga Manjari, appeared in the pastimes of Shri Chaitanya mahaprabhu as Shri Sanatana Goswami, who was considered to be a personal extension of the body of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

Sanatana Goswami's literary contribution to the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya is paralleled only by Rupa and Raghunath Das Goswami. The most important of the scriptures he compiled are the Hari-bhakti-Vilasa, the Brihad-bhagavatamrita, his Dasama-tippani commentary on Shrimad-Bhagvatam, also known as the Brihad-Vaishanva-Toshani, and the Dashama-charita.

Shri Jiva Goswami gives the following account of the ancestorial line of his uncle, Sanatana Goswami in the conclusion of his Laghu-Vaishnava-toshani, a commentary on the Bhagavata: Sarvajña was a Yajur Vedik brahmana descended from the dynasty of the sage Bharadvaja Muni, and as such was the most respectable brahmana of Karnataka. He became the king of the region in 1381 A.D. He was so learned that he was known as "Jagad-guru" or world-teacher. His son was Aniruddha, who became king in 1416 A.D. Aniruddha had two queens and two sons, Rupeshvara and Harihara. Rupeshvara was expert in all the branches of the sacred shastra. His brother Harihara was expert in the scriptures concerning royal politics and was also highly educated. Rupeshvara left Karnataka for Paurastya with his wife. He was well-versed in many branches of learning. There, he became the friend of the king, Raja Shri Shekhareshvar. Rupeshvara's son was Padmanabha, who was a great pandit in the Vedic scriptures. Padmanabha settled at Navahatta, (Naihatti) on the banks of the Ganges in Bengal. He had eight daughters and five sons. All his sons were expert in the scriptures. The names of his sons were Purushottama, Jagannatha, Narayana, Murari, and Mukundadeva.

His youngest son, Mukunda, moved to Fateyabada near Jessore in Bakla Chandradwip Paragana. Shri Mukunda deva's son was Shri Kumara Deva. He had many children. In their midst were Shri Rupa, Shri Sanatana and Shri Anupama or Vallabha. They were all great Mahābhagavata devotees of the Lord."

Shri Sanatana Goswami was born in 1488. Rupa Goswami was born in 1493. Rupa and Vallabha (Anupama) were educated in a village called Sakurma near the capital of Gauda (Bengal) and lived in their maternal uncle's house when their father died. Sanatana was Kumaradeva's eldest son. Rupa was his second son. Vallabha was his youngest son. Jiva was Vallabha's only son. Sanatana and Rupa were the names given by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to the two brothers when they later became his disciples. Their former names are not known. Some say that their original names were Amara and Santosha respectively.

The ruler of Bengal, Hussain Shah, heard from pious men about the qualifications of Rupa and Sanatana. Having herad their glories, the Shah wanted to appoint them to positions in his regime. Out of fear of the Yavana king, they were forced to accept. At that time it was not unusual for Hindus to accept posts in the government of the Muslim king. Among those Hindus who had accepted posts in the government of the Shah were many great devotees. Among them were Keshava Vasu Khan, who served the Shah as a City Magistrate or Police Commisioner in Bengal. Gopinatha Vasu and Purandara Khan served as Prime Ministers. Shri Mukunda Kaviraja was a doctor. Keshava Chatri was a Royal Diplomat and Counsel to the King. Sanatan became known as Sakara Mallik and was appointed Private Secretary. Mullik means"Lord" and was a title often given by the Muslims to respectable and wealthy families with intimate government ties. Rupa became known as Dabir Khas, and was appointed Revenue Officer and Secretary of Treasury by Hussain Shah, the king of Gauda. Shri Vallabha, or Anupama was Chief Superintendent of the Royal Mint. They were well-rewarded by the Shah for their services, who saw to it that they were given great riches. According to the Vedic customs, if one associates with Muslim he becomes contaminated and must perform purificatory rituals. Santana Goswami always associated with Muslims without paying much attention to the customs of the day, and as such considered himself to be fallen from his high brahmana caste. He therefore always presented himself as fallen, although this was only a display of his great Vaishnava humility for which he was celebrated in the Chaitanya Charitamrita and praised by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu himself.

Shri Rupa and Sanatana made their headquarters in Ramakeli, which had been established as the Capitol of Bengal in 1486 by Sultan Barbak. At present, Ramkeli is located in the Maldah district of West Bengal, near the border of Bengal on the Ganges, and is about five miles from the Maldah railway station. Ramkeli was also the home of many famous devotees, including Shri Nrishinga, the son of Advaita Acharya.

From within and without Bengal many greatly learned scholars and brahmanas used to come to see Rupa and Sanatan in their homes. From Karnataka came many brahmanas who settled near the house of Rupa and Sanatan. Their residential home was near the banks of the Ganges near a town calld Bhattavari. From Nabadwip Dham many brahmanas and pandits also came to Ramakeli to serve Rupa and Sanatana in different ways.

Shri Rupa and Sanatana were accomplished scholars—they were the crest jewels of the Gaudiya Vaishnava scholars. Their teacher in philosophy and scripture had been the brother of the great Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya— Vidyavachaspati, who taught Sanatana Goswami all the Vedic scriptures. His devotion to Vidyavachaspati cannot be described. Vidyavachaspati would often stay in Ramakeli.

The three brothers, Sanatana, Rupa, and Anupama were absorbed in Bhava-bhakti from early childhood. Remembering Vrindavana they used to play in the forest of Tamal, Keli-Kadamba, and Tulsi trees that surrounded their childhood home. In the midst of this were ponds they named after Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda. In this way they were constantly absorbed in rendering service to Shri Madana Mohana. Hearing of the wonderful pastimes of Shri Gaurasundara in nearby Nabadwipa, they were anxious to one day have his darshan. But they were told by their inner voice, "You must be patient.. Soon you will have darshan of that great Lord who is the savior of the fallen."

When Shri Sanatana was still young he had an unusual dream. In his dream he saw a brahmana. The brahmana gave him a Shrimad-Bhagavatam. Upon receiving the Bhagavata, Sanatana's hair stood up in ecstasy. His dream broke. When he awoke and saw that the brahmana and the Bhagavata had gone, he became very depressed. The next morning, after he had bathed, while he was seated for worshiping the Lord, a brahmana appeared, carrying the Bhagavata. Standing near Sanatana, the brahmana said, "Take this Bhagavat. Always study it and all perfection will be yours." Saying this, the brahmana gave him the Bhagavat and went away.

Upon receiving the treasure of the holy Bhagavata, Shri Sanatana's ecstasy knew no bounds. From that day on, Shri Sanatana would only study the Bhagavata, leaving aside other scriptures, knowing the Bhagavata to be the essence of all scriptures. In his Krishna-lila-stava, he has written,

madeka bandho matsangin
madguro man mahādhana
man nistaraka madbhagya
madānanda namo'stu te

Sanatana Goswami offers his respects to the Bhagavata, by saying: "O holy Bhagavata, you are my only company, my only friend, and my guru. You are my greatest treasure, my personal savior, the emblem of my highest fortune, the very form of ecstasy. I offer my obeisances to you."

When they heard the news that Shri Chaitanya, the life and treasure of Nadia, had taken sannyasa and gone to Puri, Rupa and Sanatana fainted. Having never seen Mahaprabhu in Navadwip, Rupa and Sanatana were despondent upon hearing that he was leaving Bengal forever. At this time they heard a divine voice saying, "Do not be in anxiety. The merciful Shri Gauranga will soon come here." Hearing this divine voice, they were consoled.

After happily spending five years headquartered in Puri, Mahaprabhu wanted to return to Bengal to take darshan of the Ganges and to see his mother, and so he set out for Nabadwipa. The joy of the devotees was boundless; getting the opportunity to see her son after such a long time Sachidevi completely forgot herself. For many days she cooked and Gaurasundara enjoyed her cooking. Mahaprabhu stayed at the house of Advaita in Shantipura for some days and then continued on to Ramkeli Gram. This is recorded in Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita: "When Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu began to proceed from Kuliya toward Vrindavana, thousands of men were with him and all of them were devotees. Wherever the Lord visited, crowds of innumerable people came to see Him. When they saw Him, all their unhappiness and lamentation disappeared. Wherever the Lord touched the ground with His lotus feet, people immediately came and gathered the dirt. Indeed they gathered so much that many holes were created in the road. The Lord eventually arrived at a village named Ramkeli. This village is situated on the border of Bengal and is very exquisite. While performing Sankirtan in Ramakeli grama, the Lord danced and sometimes lost consciousness due to love of

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God. While he was at Ramkeli-grama, an unlimited number of people came to see His lotus feet. when the Mohammedan King of Bengal heard of Mahaprabhu's influence in attracting innumerable people, he became very astonished and began to speak as follows: "Such a persojn, who is followed by so many people without giving them charity, must be a prophet. I can surely understand this fact." The Mohammedan King ordered the magistrate: "Do not disturb this Hindu prophet out of jealousy. Let Him do His own will wherever He likes."

Mahaprabhu's auspicious visit was welcomed in Ramkeli, where all the devotees became overwhelmed by ecstasy. From all directions came thousands of people to see Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. When the King became a little concerned about this phenomenon and began asking questions about Mahaprabhu, his counselor, Keshava Chatri, who was a devotee, told him, "Yes, I have heard about this mendicant sannyasi. He is begging here and there with three or four followers." The king said, "What are you saying! Thousands and thousands of people follow him wherever he goes." When he heard this, Keshava Chatri smiled a little and intimated that this was a great exaggeration. Hearing the words of Keshava Chatri, the Shah's mind was not pacified. He asked Rupa Goswami about all this. Rupa Goswami said, "Why are you questioning me? Better that you question your own mind. Because you are king of the people, you are the representative of the Supreme Lord. Therefore you can understand better than I who Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is." After hearing this, the Shah was pacified.

Beneath a tree on the banks of the Ganges, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu stopped to rest. He was accompanied only by his most intimate associates. In the evening, Sanatana Goswami and Rupa Goswami arrived there. They met Nityananda and Haridas Thakura who informed Mahaprabhu of their arrival. In great humility, the two of them took bunches of straw between their teeth, and, each binding a cloth around his neck, they fell down like rods before the Lord. Upon seeing Mahaprabhu, Rupa and Sanatan were overjoyed and began to weep out of humility. The Lord asked them to get up and blessed them. They arose and, taking a straw between their teeth, they humbly offered their prayers with folded hands. They said, "All glories to Shri Krishna Chaitanya, the most merciful savior of the fallen souls. All glories to the Lord." Then they submitted themselves, saying, "Sir, we belong to the lowest class of men, and our association and occupation are also of the lowest type. Therefore we cannot introduce ourselves to you. We feel very much ashamed standing here before you. Dear Lord, you have incarnated to deliver the fallen souls. You should consider that in this world there is none so fallen as us.

You have delivered the two brothers Jagai and Madhai, but to deliver them You did not have to exert yourself much. the brothers Jagai and Madhai belonged to the brahmana caste, and their residence was in the holy place of Nabadwipa. They never served low-class persons, nor were they accesories to abominable persons. Jagai and Madhai had but one fault—they were addicted to sin. However heaps of sin are burned to ashes simply by Nāmābhāsa: the dim reflection of the holy name. Jagai and Madhai uttered your name in blasphemy, but their utterance of the divine name delivered them. We are millions of times inferior to Jagai and Madhai. We are more degraded, fallen and sinful than they. Actually, we belong to the caste of meat-eaters, for we are servants of meat-eaters. Because we associate with them we have become the enemy of cows and brahmanas."

In this way, the two brothers humbly submitted that because of their abominable activities they were now bound by the neck and hands by sin and wallowing in the filthy ditch of sense gratification.

They continued their appeal to Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: "No one in the universe is powerful enough to deliver us. You are the savior of lost souls. Only you can save us. If you deliver such fallen sinners as ourselves, the strength of your mercy will become famous throughout the world. You have come to save the most fallen. We are the most fallen. If you show your mercy to us, then, the power of your mercy will be witnessed by everyone and your mission to save the most fallen will be a great success. Although we are unqualified to receive your mercy, still it is our heart's desire."

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, "My dear Dabhir Khasa and Sakara Mallika: you two are my old servants. From this day on your names will be Rupa and Sanatana. Now please give up this display of humility, for it breaks my heart. You have written me many kind and humble letters, from which I could understand all about you. In order to instruct you I sent you a verse that read: 'If a woman has a paramour she will perform her household duties even more carefully before, so that no one will know, all the while thinking of her paramour and relishing that mellow within her heart.' My only business in coming to Bengal was to see the two of you. Everyone asks why I have come to Ramakeli. No one knows that I have come here only to see you. It is well that you have come to visit me. Now you may return to your homes. Have no fear of anything: birth after birth you have been my eternial servants. I am sure that Krishna shall soon deliver you."

The Lord then blessed them by placing his hands on their heads. Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana then touched the Lord's lotus feet to their heads. When all the

devotees saw the Lord's mercy upon Rupa and Sanatana they became joyful and began chanting the holy name of Hari. Many of the Lord's personal associates were there, including Nityananda, Haridas Thakura, Shrivasa Thakura, Gadadhara Pandit, Mukunda, Jagadananda, Murari, and Vakreshvara Pandit. Following the Lord's instructions, Shri Rupa and Shri Sanatana touched the holy feet of all these great devotees, who became exceedingly happy and congratulated the two brothers for attaining the Lord's mercy. At this time Shri Vallabha also received the mercy of the Lord and became known as Anupama. After taking permission from the devotees there, Shri Rupa and Sanatana prepared to depart, but before doing so submitted a proposal before the Lord's lotus feet.

They said, "O Lord, although the Ruler of Bengal, Hussein Shah, has some regard for you, your mission here is now complete; thus we humbly request you to depart, lest some misfortune befall you and the devotees. The king may have some respect for you, but he is a meat-eater and a muslim and as such is naturally inimical to the cows and brahmanas. He cannot be trusted for long. It is our humble consideration that there is no need to go to Vrindavan with such a great crowd. Vrindavan is a place of simplicity and rustic beauty, not pomp and grandeur. We submit that it is best not to make a pilgrimage there with hundreds and thousands of followers."

After speaking in this way, Shri Rupa and Sanatana offered their respects at the Lord's lotus feet and went home. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then made up his mind to leave that village. The following morning he left for Kanai Natashala, where he saw many of the paintings of Krishna's pastimes that were kept on display there. That night he considered Sanatana's proposal not to go to Vrindavan with a big crowd. He thought, "If I go to Vrindavana with so many people, its mellow ambience of simplicity and rustic beauty will be ruined. I should go alone or with one other person to Vrindavan. In that way, my pilgrimage to Vrindavan will be very beautiful." Thinking in this way, the Lord returned to Jagannatha Puri.

The Chaitanya Charitamrita (M.L. 19) describes how Sanatan Goswami managed to free himself from his government duties and escape from prison to join Shri Rupa in Vrindavan. On the plea of illness he left his post to study the Bhagavata with devotees and brahmanas at his home. When a doctor brought this to the Shah's attention, he went to Sanatana and demanded that he accompany him to Orissa. When Sanatana refused he was imprisoned. Sanatana Goswami made use of some money sent by Rupa Goswami and escaped by bribing his jailer. He then left for Benares to meet Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. On the way Sanatan stopped at a

hotel with his servant Ishan, and after realizing that the hotel keeper planned to kill them for gold in Ishan's possession, Sanatan made Ishan pay the hotel keeper his last coin, and begged his help to pass through the jungle. The hotel keeper was moved and, being the leader of the local dacoits, helped them through the jungle and over the Hazaribag mountains. Parting company with Ishan, he went on to meet his brother-in-law, Shri Kanta. Seeing that his brother had become a fugitive and a mendicant, Shri Kanta asked Sanatan to stay with him, but Sanatan refused. Upon the departure of Sanatana Goswami, Shri Kanta gave his brother-in-law a fine woolen blanket.

Finally Sanatana reached Benares and met Shri Chaitanya at the house of Chandreshekhara. The Lord ordered him to shave his beard and long hair, and so Sanatana shaved his head and adopted the dress of a babaji, accepting some old cloth from Tapan Mishra. When he could understand that the Lord disapproved of a babaji in the dress of a mendicant wearing a fine and expensive woolen blanket, he traded the blanket to a brahman he met at the Ganges in exchange for a torn quilt. The Lord was pleased by Sanatana's humility and submission and instructed him for some time on the science of devotion.

At that time, he elaborated on the position of the soul in the material world and the soul's constitutional nature as an eternal servant of Krishna. He explained the different energies of Krishna—svarupa-shakti, maya-shakti, and tatastha-shakti. He described the relative positions of karma, jñāna and bhakti by relating the parable of Sarvajñā, the astrologer. He showed how that all scriptures have Krishna and his service as their aim. At that time Shri Chaitanya described the consitutional position of Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He discussed all the different forms, features, plenary expansions, and avatars of the Lord. He explained the spiritual worlds of Goloka and Vaikuntha, and described the Lord's opulence in Vaikūtha and his sweetness in Vrindāvana. The illusion of Brahma was discussed. After this Chaitanya Mahaprabhu described the means of attaining Krishna Prema. He described the two kinds of jivas and explained how karma,jñāna, and yoga divorced from bhakti are useless. He described the six kinds of surrender and showed the worthlessness of Varnāshram devoid of Krishna. He spoke of the divine mercy of Krishna and explained how Krishna appears as diskhā-guru, shiksha-guru, and chaitya-guru in order to enlighten the surrendered souls. He explained the development of faith, the three gradations of devotees, the twenty-six qualities of a pure Vaishnava and the three characteristic features of a true Vaishnava. Kindness as a primary feature of Vaishnavas was described, using the

examples of Haridasa Thakura and Vasudeva Datta. Mahāprabhu explained that association with sadhus is indispensable to Krsihna-bhakti and Krishna-preama, where bad association is detrimental to the growth of divine love. The meaning of surrender and self-abnegation were discussed, as were the characteristic features of a liberated soul.

At that time Mahāprabhu explained the two divisions of sadhana-bhakti: Vaidhi-Sadhana-Bhakti and Raganuga-Sadhana-Bhakti. The sixty-four branches of sadhana-bhakti were described with special emphasis on the five most important: association with devotees, chanting of the holy name, hearing Shrimad-Bhagvatam, deity worship, and living in a holy place. The nine different methods of devotion and the devotees who attained perfection in each of them were discussed. After this the internal and external development of raganuga-sadhana-bhakti was explained. After this bhava-bhakti and prema-bhakti were discussed along with the nine stages of sadhana, the characteristics of a bhava-bhakta and the characteristics of a prema-bhakta. At this time, the Lord explained the Sixty-four qualities of Krishna, the meaning of true and false renunciation. He explained the essential importance of associating with saints and, by way of illustration, told the story of Narada and the hunter. In this way, Shri Chaitanya mahaprabhu explained the transcendental position of Krishna, the nature of the jiva, the nature of devotional service, and the ultimate perfection of love of Godhead. He also explained the ātmarāma verse of Shrimad Bhagavatam in sixty-one different ways.

After enlightening Sanatana in all the truths of bhakti, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ordered him to write books on devotional service, to establish the proper practices and behavior for devotees, to install deities and reveal the proper methods of deity worship, and to excavate the lost holy places of pilgrimage in Vrindavana.

The books of Sanatana Goswami

Among the important books compiled by Sanatana Goswami is the Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa, which explains the proper duties and correct behavior for Vaishnavas. In the Chaitanya-charitamrita, Krishna dasa Kaviraja Goswami records Mahāprabhu's instructions to Sanātana on compiling Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa. Kavirāja Goswami writes (CC ML 29.326-345): "Folding his hands, Sanātana Goswami said, 'My Lord, you ordered me to write a directory about the activities of Vaishnavas. I am a most lowborn person. I have no knowledge of good behvior. How is it possible for me to write authorized directions about Vaishanva activities?"

Sanatana Goswami then requested the Lord, 'Please personally tell me how I can write this difficult book about Vaishhava behavior. Please manifest yourself within my heart. If you would please manifest yourself within my heart and personally direct me in writing this book, then, although I am lowborn, I may hope to be able to write it. You can do this because You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead Yourself, and whatever You direct is perfect.'

"Shri Chaitanya mahaprabhu replied, 'Whatever you want to do you will be able to do correctly by Lord krishna's favor. He will manifest the real purport. Because you asked me for a synopsis, please hear these few indications. In the beginning one must take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master. In your book there sho8uld be the characteristics of the bona fide guru and the bona fide disciple. Then, before accepting a spiritual master, one can be assured of the spiritual master's position. Similarly the spiritual master can also be assured of the disciple's position. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, should be described as the worhsipable object, and you should consider the bīja-mantra for the worship of Krishna, Rama or any other expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You should discuss the qualifications necessary for receiving a mantra, the perfection of the mantra, the purification of the mantra, initiation, morning duties, remembrance of the Supreme Lord, cleanliness, and washing the mouth and other parts of the body. In the morning one should regularly brush his teeth, take his bath, offer prayers to teh Lord and offer obeisances to the spiritual master. One should render service to the spiritual master and paint one's body in twelve places with tilaka. One should stamp the holy names of the Lord on his body, or one should stamp the symbols of the Lord, such as the disc and club. After this, you should describe how one should decorate his body with gopicandana, wear neck beads, collect tulasi leaves from the tulasi tree, cleanse his closth and the altar, cleanse one's own house or apartment and got to the temple and ring the bell just to draw the attention of Lord Krishna. Also describe Deity worship, wherein one should offer food to Krishna at least five times daily. One should in due time place Krishna on a bed. you should also describe the process for offering arati and the worship of the Lord according to the list of five, sixteen, of fifty ingredients. The characteristics of the Deities should be discussed as well as the characteristics of the shalagrāma shila. One should also discuss visiting the Deities in the temple and touring holy places like Vrindāvana, Mathurā and Dvarakā. You should glorify the holy name and explain the importance of carefully giving up offenses when chanting the holy name. You should explain the symptoms of a Vaishnava and how to give up all

kinds of seva-aparādha, offenses in Deity worship. The items of worship, such as water, conchshell, flowers, incense and lamp, should be described. You should also mention chanting softly, offering prayers, circumambulating, and offering obeisances. All these should be carefully studied. Other items to be considered are the method of performing purascharana,taking Krishna-prasāda, giving up the eating of unoffered food and not blaspheming the Lord's devotees. One should know the symptoms of a devotee and how to associate with devotees. One should know how to satisfy the devotee by rendering service, and one should know how to give up the association of nondevotees. One should also regularly hear the recitation of Srīmad-Bhāgvatam. You should describe the ritualistic duties of every day, and you should describe the fortnightly duties—especially observing Ekādashī fast, which comes every fortnight. You should also describe the duties of every month, especially the observance of cermonies like Janmāṣṭami, Ramanavamī and Nrsimha-caturdasī. You should recommend the performance of pure Ekādashī. Whatever you say about Vaishanva behavior, the establishment of Vaishnava temples and Deities and everything else should be supported by evidence from the Puranas. You should give general and specific instructions of the behavior and activities of a Vaishnava. You should outline things that are to be done and things that are not to be done. All this should be described as regulations and etiquette. I have thus given a synopsis of the Vaishanva regulative principles. I have given this in brief just to give you a little direction. When you write on this subject, Krishna wil help you by spiritually awakening you."

Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa is based on notes collected by Gopal Bhatta Goswami and is known as a vaishnava smiti. If one examines its content, one will see that its content closely conforms to the instructions given Sanatana Goswami by Shri Chaitanya. Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami summarizes its contents as follows:This vaishnava-smriti-grantha was finished in twenty chapters, known as vilāsas. In the first vilasa there is a description of how a relationship is established between the spiritual master and the disciple, and mantras are explained. In the second vilāsa, the process of initiation is described. In the third vilāsa, the methods of Vaishanva behavior are given, with emphasis on cleanliness, constant remembrance of of the Supreme Personality fo Godheaed, and the chanting of the mantras given by the initiating spiritual master. In the fourth filāsa are descriptions of samskāra, the reformatory method; tilāka, the application of twelve tilākas on twelve places of the body; mudra, marks on the body; māla, chanting with beads; and guru-pūja, worship of the spirtiual master. In the fifth vialāsa, one is instructed on how to

make a place to sit for meditaqtion, and there are descriptions of breathing exercises, meditation and worship of hte shalagram-shila representation of Lord Vishnu. In the sixth vilāsa, the required practices for inviting the transcendental form of the Lrod and bathing Him are given. In the seventh vilasa, one is instructed on how to collect flowers used for the worship of Lord Vishnu. In the eight vilasa, there is a description of the Deity and instructions on how to set up incense, light lamps, make offerings, dance, play music, beat drums, garland the Deity, offer prayers and obeisances and counteract offenses. In the ninth vilāsa, there are descriptions of the devotees of the Lord (Vaishnāvasa or saintly persons). In the eleventh vilasa, there are elaborate descriptions of Deity worship and the glories of the holy name of the Lord. One is instructed on how to chant the holy name of the Deity, and there are discussions about offenses committed while chanting the holy name, along with methods for getting relief from such offenses. There are also descriptions of the glories of devotional service and the surrendering process. In the twelfth vilasa, Ekadashi is described. In the thirteenth vilasa, fasting is discussed, as well as observance of the Mahā-dvadashi ceremony. In the fourteenth vilasa, different duties for different months are outline. In the fifteenth vilasa, there are instructions on how to observe Ekadashi fasting without even drinking water. There are also descriptions of branding the body with the symbols of Vishnu, and discussions of Caturmasya observations during the rainy season, and iscussions of Janmāshtami, Parsviakadashi, Shravana-dvadashi, Rāma-navami, and Vijayi-dashami. The sixteenth vilāsa discusses duties to be observed in the month of Karttika (October-November), or the Damodara month, or Urja, when lamps are offered in the Deity room or above the temple. Tehre are also descriptions of the Govardhana-pūjā and Ratha-yātrā. The seventeenth vilāsa discusses preparations for Deity worship, mahā-mantra chanting and the process of japa. In the eighteenth vilāsa the different forms of Shri Vishnu are described. The nineteenth vilāsa discusses the establishment of the Deity and the rituals observed in bathing the Deity before installation. The twentieth vilasa discusses the construction of temples, referring to those constructed by the great devotees. shri Santana Goswami's commentary on Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa is called the Dig-Darhsini-Tika.

Among the many important books compiled by Sanatana Goswami is the Brihad-Bhagavatamritam. Whereas the Hari-Bhakti-Vilas expands on Mahaprabhu's teachings to Sanatana regarding Vaishanva behavior and ritual, Brihad-Bhagavatamrita analyses the ontology and metaphysics of Mahaprabhu's teachings. In Brihad-Bhagavatamritam, Sanatana Goswami records the

conversation that took place between Pariksit Mahārāja and his mother Uttara after he had heard the Bhagavata from Shukadeva. She asks him to explain the gist of the Bhagavatam, and Pariksit Mahārāja begins by telling the story of Narada's search for the most fortunate and intimate devotee of Krishna. This part of the conversation reveals the gradation of intimacy in devotional service. Progressing from those devotees whose bhakti is mixed with karma (Brahma) and jñāna (Shiva), Narada progresses to shanta-rasa (Prahlada) dasya-rasa (Hanuman) sakhya-rasa (Arjuna) and finally to Krishna's dearmost devotee Uddhava, who aspires for a position in Vrindavan and who reveals the love of the gopis for Krishna as the last word in bhakti.

Part Two of Brihad-Bhagavtamrita reveals the story of gopa-kumara, an errant cowherd boy who, having received mantra initiation from a resident of Vrindavan, passes through one planetary system after the next, exploring different levels of consciousness in a spritual odyssey that takes him from earth, through the heavenly planets to Brahmaloka, Viraja, the brahmajyoti, Shivaloka, Vaikuntha, Ayodhya, Dwarka, Mathurā, and finally Goloka, where he realizes his eternal position in the pastimes of Krishna in sakhya rasa. In Brihad-Bhagavatamritam there are descriptions of devotees, intimate devotees, most intimate devotees and complete devotees. According to Sri Bhaktivedanta Swami, "The second part describes the glories of the spiritual world, known as Goloka-mahātmya-nirupana, as well as the process of renunciation of the material world. It also describes real knowledge, devotional service, the spiritual world, love of Godhead, attainment of life's destination and the bliss of the spiritual world. In this way there are seven chapters in each part, fourteen chapters in all." Sanatana Goswami Prabhu also represents the teachings of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in his commentary on Shrimad-Bhagavatam. Of this commentary, Sri Bhaktivedanta Swami writes, "Dasama-tippani is a commentary on the Tenth Canto of Shrimad-Bhagavatam. Another name for this commentary is Brihad-vaishnava-toshani-tika. In the bhakti Ratnakara it is said that Dasama-tippani was finished in 1476 Sakabda...Sanatana goswami gave his [Brihad] Vaishanva-tosani commentary to Srila Jiva Goswami for editing, and Shrila Jiva Goswami edited this under the name of Laghu-tosani. Whatever he immediately put down in writing was finished in the year 1476 Saka. Jiva Goswami completed Laghu-tosani in the year Sakabda 1504. Sanatana Goswami also composed Krishna-lila-stava which is known as Dashama-charit and describes the pastimes of Krishna up to Mathurā.

After meeting with Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and receiving the instructions that would form the basis for the scriptures he would later compile, Sanatana Goswami went to Vrindvan by the main road, and when he reached Vrindavan he met Śubuddhi Raya. When he arrived in Vrindavan, he found that Rupa Goswami had already left. He then went to Jagannatha Puri through Jharikhanda, the Uttara Pradesh jungle. After contracting a skin disease he felt to be offensive to the Lord's touch, he decided to give up his life by falling beneath the wheels of the Jaganātha Ratha-Yātrā cart, but Chaitanya Mahaprabhu expressed his disapproval of suicide and saved Sanatana through his mercy. Later Sanatana Goswami met Haridas Thakura and heard from him of the disappearance of his brother Anupama.

The Chaitanya Charitamrita records how, while in Jagannatha Puri, Sanatana Goswami described the glories of Haridasa Thakura. When Jagadananda Pandit granted Sanatana permission to leave for Vrindavan, Shri Chaitanya disapproved, and glorified the qualities of Sanatana Goswami, ordering Sanatana Goswami to remain in Jagannatha Puri for a year. Later, when Jagadānanda Pandit went to Vrindavan, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu put him under the guidance of Sanatana Goswami. At that time, Jagadananda Pandit became angry with Sanatana for wearing a turban made from a piece of red cloth given him by a sannyasi other than Shri Chaitanya, but was pacified by Sanatana's deep devotion. (At that time, Sanatana remarked that red cloth is unfit for Gaudiya Vaishnava Sannyasis, since it is worn by the Mayavadi followers of Shankaracarya's impersonal school. Since that time, out of respect for the words of Sanatana Goswami, Gaudiya Vaishnava Sannyasis have adopted the color saffron for the dress of renunciation.) When Sanatana Goswami finally returned to Vrindavan, he was reunited with Rupa Goswami, and the two of them remained there to execute the orders of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Sanatana Goswami and Madana Mohan

The Bhakti-Ratnakara describes how Sanatana began the worship of his Madana-Mohan deity. Among Mahāprabhu's orders to Sanatana was his instruction to establish the worship of the Deity of Krishna. The Bhakti Ratnakara shows how Shri Sanantana Goswami, when he was staying in Vrindavan, began the worship of Shri Madana-Mohan, also known as Madana Mohana. In Mahavana, nearby Krishna's birthplace in Vrindāvana, Sanātana Goswami made a hut of grass. There he would

perform his daily bhajan. One day, as he went out begging, he came to a small village on the banks of the Yamunā. At that time Madana Mohanaa Dev was playing on the side of the river with some small gopa boys. When he saw Santana, he cried out, "O Father! Baba!" With this, he came running after Santana Goswami and grabbed hold of his hand, saying, "Take me with you. I want to go with you."

"Little boy, why do you want to go with me?"

"I want to stay with you."

"If you stay with me, what will you eat?"

"What do you eat?"

"Only some dry chapatis and coarse rice."

"Then I will also eat that, Baba."

"Even if you could eat like that, you can't stay with me. You must stay with your mother and father."

"But, Baba! I want to stay with you."

Making the boy understand his wishes, Sanatana sent him home, and then continued his begging rounds.

That night, the boy appeared to him in a dream. In the dream, the boy was laughing again and again. He took hold of Sanatana's hand and told him, "Baba! My name is Madana Mohana. Tomorrow I shall come to you." Saying this, Madana Mohana disappear[illegible] and with this Sanatana awoke. He was so overcome by ecstasy that he felt as if h[illegible]oul had been stolen from his body. He thought, "What have I seen? I have neve[illegible]een such a beautiful boy. His mind was filled with remembrance of Shri Hari. When he opened the door to his kutir, he found that standing in the doorway was a wonderful murti of Shri Madana Mohanaa. That deity was so beautiful that it filled the four directions with its effulgence.

Sanatana Goswami was stunned for some time, but after a while, he came to his senses, and at that time, his eyes filled with tears of ecstasy which gradually wet the earth beneath him. After this, he began the worship of the deity by performing an abhusheka ceremony. When Rūpa Goswami saw that wonderful deity, he was filled with prema.

Shri Sanātana used to serve that deity in his own humble grass hut. Shri Rūpa Goswami sent word of these auspicious events to Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Jagannatha Puri by messenger.

After begging all day, Shri Sanātana Goswami would return to his grass hut in the evening and offer some dry chapatis to his deity, Madana-Gopala. Sometimes

he would also prepare some shak or other vegetables to go with it. In any case, he would never prepare any vegetables with oil or salt. Most of the time he could only offer chapatis. As a result, Sanatana would become sorrowful, thinking himself unfit to properly worship the deity. But he couldn't afford it, because Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had given him a service: to compose devotional scriptures. At the same time he had to spend all day collecting alms. When could he find the time to go out and beg for oil and salt? Shri Sanatana Goswami's mind was filled with grief. As Paramātma, the Lord knew Sanatana's mind. Madana Mohanaa thought to himself, "I am eating dry chapatis, and Sanatana's mind is very unhappy as a result. He wants to serve me in royal style. As a result he feels that his service is of no use.

At that time there was a wealthy merchant of the kshatriya caste named Shri Krishna Das Kapoor. He was on his way to Mathura to do some business. He was coming down the Yamuna in a big boat. When his boat became stuck on a sandbar, and he could see no way to continue, he began to think "What can we do now?" At that time Krishna das Kapoor heard from the local people that there was a big sadhu living in Vrindāvan who could help. His name was Sanātana Goswami. When Krishna Dasa Kapoor came to see him, Sanatana was sitting in his hut, writing, wearing only a loincloth, his body lean from austerity and renunciation. Sanātana offered his visitor a grass mat as a seat, and touching Krishna das Kapoor with his hand, bade him sit. At this, Krishna Das Kapoor said, "Baba! give me your mercy."

Sanatana said, "I am only a beggar. What kind of mercy can I give you?"

"I only pray for your blessings. My boat is stuck on a sandbar in the Yamunā river and I can see no way to free it."

"I know nothing about it. Explain it all to Madana Mohana."

Krishna Das Kapoor offered his dandavats before the Madana Mohana deity and said, "O Madana Mohana dev! If you give me your mercy and free my boat, then whatever profit I make from this business I will give it to you for your seva."

With this prayer, Kapoor asked permission to leave. That day a big storm came and rain poured from the heavens, raising the level of the Yamuna's waters. As the waters grew higher and higher, Kapoor's boat was freed from the sandbar and began making its way down the Yamuna. Krishna das Kapoor could understand that this was all the mercy of Madana Mohana. He had made a handsome profit on his cargo, and donated it all to build a lavish temple for Shri Madana Mohana, including a bhogashala where first-class edibles could be stored for the pleasure of

the Lord. From that time on, Madana Mohana was served in royal style. Seeing this royal service of Madana Mohana, Sanatana Goswami became very happy. Soon after this, Sanatana Goswami accepted Krishna das Kapoor as his disciple and gave him initiation. The Madana Mohan temple still stands today, and is an important place of pilgrimage for all Gaudiya Vaishnavas.

In discussing the importance of the Madana Mohan Deity, Bhaktivedanta Swami writes, "Srila Sanatana Goswami is the ideal spiritual master, for he delivers one the shelter of the lotsu feet of Madana Mohana. Even though one may be unable to travel on the field of Vrindāvan due to forgetfulness of his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he can get an adquate opportuinty to stay in Vrindavana and dreive all spiritual benefits by the mercy of Sanātana Goswami." Similarly, Krishna das Kavirāj Goswami prays, "jayatam suratau pangor, mama manda-mater gati, mat-sarvasva-padambhojau, radha-madana-mohanau": Glory to the all merciful Radha-Madana-Mohana! I am lame and ill-advised, yet they are my directors, and Their lotus feet are everything to me." Kaviraja Goswami also says, "These three Deities of Vrindavan [Madana-mohana, the Deity of Sanatana Goswami, Govinda, the deity of Rupa Goswami, and Gopinatha, the Deity of Raghunatsha Das Goswami] have absorbed the heart and soul of the Gaudiya Vaishanvas, [followers of Lord Chaitanya]. I worship their lotus feet, for they are the Lods of my heart." (CC AL 1.19) Translating the commentary of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada, Sri Bhaktivedanta Swami writes:

"The author of Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita offers his respectful obeisances unto the three Deities of Vrindavan named Shri Radha-madana-Mohana, Shri Radha-Govinda-deva, and Shri Radha-Gopinathaji. These three Deities are the life and sol of the Bengali Vaishanvas, or Gaudiya Vaishanvas, who have a natural aptitude for residing in Vrindavana. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas who follow strictly in the line of Shri Chaitanya Mahrapabhu worhsip the Divinity by chanting transcendental sounds meant to develop a sense of one's transcendental relationship wit the Supreme Lord, a reciprocation of mellows (rasas) of mutual affection, and ultimately, the achievement of the desired success in loving service. These three Deities are worshiped in three different stages of one's development. The followers of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu scrupulously follow these principles of approach.

"Gaudiya Vaishanvas perceive the ultimate objective in Vedic hymns composed of eighteen transcendental letters that adore Krishna as Madana-mohan, Govinda, and Gopijanavallabha. Madana-mohana is He who charms Cupid, the god of love, Govinda is He who pleases the senses and the cows, and Gopijanavallbhais

the transcendental lover of the gopis. Krishna Himself is called Madana-mohana, Govinda, Gopijanavallbha and countless other names as He plays in His different pastimes with His devotees.

"The three Deities—MadanaMohana, Govinda, andGopijanavallabha—have very specific qualities. Worhsip of Madana-mohana is on the platform of reestablishing our forgotten relationship wioth the Personality of Godhead. In the beginning of our spiritual life we must worship Madana-mohana so that He may attract us and nullify our attachment for material sense gratification. This relationship with Madana-mohana is necessary for neophyte devotees. When one wishes to render service to the Lord with strong attachment, one then worships Govinda on the platform of transcendental service. Govinda is the reservoir of all pleasures. When by the grace of Krishna and the other devotees one reaches perfeciton in devotional service, he can appreciate Krishna as Gopijanavallabha [Gopinatha], the pleasure Deity of the damsels of Vraja.

"Lord Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu explained this mode of devotional service in three stages, and therefore these worshipable Deities were installed in Vrindavan by different Goswamis. They are very dear to the Gaudiya Vaishnavas there, who visit the temples at least once a day."

Bhaktivedanta Swami gives further understanding on this subject in his introduction to the Chaitanya Charitamrita: "In Chaitanya Charitamrita, Krishnadas first offers his obeisances to Madana-mohan vigraha [Santana Goswami's Deity], the Deity who can help us progress in Krishna consciousness. In the execution of Krishna consciousness, our first business is to know Krishna and our relationship with Him. To know Krishna is to know one's self and to know one's self is to know one's relationship with Him. Since this relationship can be learned by worhsiping Madana-mohana-vigraha, Krishnadas Kaviraj first establishes his relationship with HIm.

"When this is established, Krishnadas begins to worship the functional Deity, Govinda [Rupa Goswami's Deity]. ..Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami maintains that the Radha and Krishna Deities [Radha-Govinda] show us how to serve Radha and Krishna. The madana-mohana Deities simply establish that "I am your eternal servant." With Govinda, however, there is actual acceptance of service, and therefore he is called the functional Deity. The Gopinatha Deity is Krishna as master and proprietor of the gopis. He attracted all the gopis or cowherd girls by the sound of his flute, and when they came, he dance with them... Krishna is therefore called Gopinatha because He is the beloved master of the gopis."

This progression—Krishna or Madana-Mohana, Radha-Govinda, Radha-Gopinatha—is also found in the three key words of the eighteen syllable Krishna gayatri. This is explained in Jiva Goswami's remarks on the Gayatri mantram, found in his commentary on the Brahma-Samhita which is translated by Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura. There, Jiva Gosami explains that the mantram has six elements, and that "Krishnaysa," in the mantram refers to Krishna-svarupa, or in Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's language, "the proper self of Krishna." [Madana-Mohana]. The second element in the mantram, or the second aspect of Krishan to be revealed [Govinda] is "krishnasya chinmaya vraja-lila-avilāsa-svarūpa": "the true nature of Krishna's pastimes in Vrindavana. The third aspect of Krishna is Gopijanavallabha, [Gopinatha] Krishna who is dear to the gopis.

It is therefore said that in the mantram "Klim Krishnāya, Govindāya, Gopijanavallabhaya, etc..." "Krishnaya" is Madana-Mohana, the first object of worship represented in sambandha-jñāna, whose acharya is Shri Sanātana Goswami. "Govindaya" is the Lord who is surrounded by his intimate serving group. Because Govinda accepts one's service, He is the deity of abidheya-tattva, whose acharya is Rūpa Goswami. "Gopijanavallabhaya" in the mantram refers to Gopinātha, the master of the great rasa dance in which all the gopis take part. This represents the ultimate goal, or prayojana, whose achārya is Raghunatha das Goswami. Raghunatha das Goswami, the acharya of the highest goal of life, accepts the lotus feet of Shri Rupa (the abidheaya acharya) as his highest aspiration and thus shows us the path to the highest goal. Rupa Goswami in his turn always offers his respects to Sanatana Goswami (the sambandha acharya), whom he considered to be his spiritual master.

In his commentary on the talks betwen Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Ramananda Raya, Bhaktivinoda Thakura elaborates further on this theme. Bhaktividanta Swami translates his commentary as follows: "In the mantra: klim kāmadevaya vidmahe pushpabānāya dhīmahī tan no nangah prachodayat, Krishna is called Kamadeva or Madana-mohana, the Deity who establishes our relationship with Krishna. Govinda, or pushpa-bana, who carries an arrow made of flowers, is the Personality of Godhead who accepts our devotional service. Ananaga or Gopijanavallabha, satisfies all the gopis and is the ultimate goal of life."

Bhaktivinoda Thakura, in his Anubhashya commentary on Chaitanya Charitamrita, further explains this version on the basis of Jiva Goswami's comments on the Brahma-samhita verse: atha venuninadasya trayimurtimayi

gatih, sphuranti praviveshashu mukhabjani sarojajah. This verse describes how the flutesong of Shri Krishna was heard by Brahma as the Gayatri mantram. Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura translates "trayimurti gatih" to mean that the gayatri is "the mother of the three Vedas." Bhaktivinoda explains that in this verse, the words "trayimurti gatih" means that the sound emanating from the flutesong of Shri Krishna, or Gayatri is the basis of sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana. He says that "trimurtimayi" also indicates the three murtis Madana-mohana, Govinda, and Gopinatha. Upon hearing this sound, Brahma became initiated as a twice-born, and became acquainted with the ocean of truth (sambandha, abhidheya, prayojana), after which he uttered the famous "Govinda" prayers beginning with "chintamani prakara-sadmasu." Bhaktivinoda Thakura supports this view by quoting at length from Brahma-Samhita, Jiva Goswami's commentary, Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakrua, and the Gopal Tappani Upanishad, which all corroborate the above version.

It is clear from the above that Sanatana Goswami occupies a special position in the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya. He is the acharya of sambandha-jñāna, or knowledge of our proper devotional relationship with Krishna. Moreover his deity, Madana-mohan, helps us to overcome the influence of the senses and fix our minds in devotional service. Sanatana Goswami's literatures are a storehouse of nectar. His personal example of humility is beyond description. He is an intimate associate of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Radha-Krishna, and the guru of Shrila Rupa Goswami. Let us all pray for the shelter of his lotus feet.

Radharani appears to Shri Sanatana

In Bhakti-Ratnakara, it is written that one day Sanatana Goswami went to Radha-Kunda to see Shri Rupa and Shri Raghunataha Dasa Goswami. When they saw Sanatana approaching, they rose to offer him respect, and then offered him a seat. With this, the three of them began an *ishta-gosthi*, a discussion about Krishna. Shri Rupa Goswami had written a Stotram to Radharani called "Chatu-Pushpanjali"—an offering of four flowers. Shri Sanatana Goswami read the verses, and was struck by one in particular:

navagorochana gauri, pravarendi varamvaram,
manistavaka-vidyoti-veni-vyalangana-phanam

"O Vrindabaneshvari! I offer my respects unto you. Because your complexion is like newly molten gold, you are known as Gaurangi. Your dress is beautiful like that of a blue lotus. Your long braid of hair resembles a black serpent decorated with jewels." When Sanatana saw the line, "Your braided hair resembles a black serpent..." he thought about this comparison and said, "Is this a logical or reasonable metaphor? To compare Radharani's hair to a serpent?"

That afternoon Shri Sanatana went to Radha-Kunda to take his bath. After offering different reverential prayers to the Radha Kunda, he took his bath there. At that time, a little distance from the Kunda, he could see some gopi boysa dn girls playing, at the foot of some trees. As he glanced in their direction, he could just make out that right behind the head of one of the girls was what might have been a long, black, dangling braid, but looked to Sanatana Goswami much more like a deadly snake, swaying back and forth as if ready to strike. At that time he called out, "O young girl! Be careful: there is a snake creeping up on your back!" The young girl, caught up in the joy of her playing, took no notice. Apparently she couldn't hear him. Thereupon he went running up to her and saw that the girl was none other than Shri Radha Thakurani. When the gopas and gopis saw him, they burst out laughing. They laughed and laughed for some time without stopping. Shri Sanatana Goswami was struck dumb. After this, he could understand the logic of Shri Rupa Goswami's metaphor.

Krishna brings milk

The Bhakti Ratnakara records how once Shri Sanatana Goswami was alone in the forest on the banks of the Pavana Sarovara performing his bhajan in a secluded place. He had been fasting from food and drink. As he is the supersoul in all living being the Lord could understand everything. He thought, "My devotee is starving. I cannot tolerate this." In the dress of a gopa, Krishna entered the forest where Sanatana was staying, carrying a pot of milk. He came before Sanatana and said, "Baba! I have brought you some milk."
Sanatana said, "Why have you brought me milk?"
"You are not eating properly, that's why."
"How did you know that I am not eating anything?"
"Many gopas have come and gone by here. They told me you have not been eating."
"Why didn't they come?"
"They have much work at home, so they sent me."

"You are such a little boy, why have you taken so much trouble for me?"
"No, no, father. It is no trouble at all."
Taking the pot of milk, Sanatana said, "Sit down, little boy. I will finish the milk and give you back your pot."
"No baba. I cannot sit with you. I have to milk the cows. I will come and fetch the pot tomorrow." Saying this, the boy vanished, and Shri Sanatana became speechless. He could understand that all this was the work of Krishna. He began to drown in the tears that poured from his eyes as he drank the milk. From that day on he ate by practicing madhukari, or only accepting a tiny bit from many different residents of Vrindavan. Gradually the residents of Vrindavan built him a kutir so that he could stay there.

Accepting Service from Shri Radha

One day Shri Rupa Goswami wanted to prepare some sweet rice for Sanatana Goswami, but didn't have the necessary provisions for making sweet rice in his kutir. At that time, she who brings about the fulfillment of the inner aspiration of devotees, Shrimati Radha Thakurani, could understand everything. And so, in the dress of a young gopi girl she brought milk, rice, and sugar to Rupa Goswami, saying, "Swamiji! Swamiji! I have brought you a gift of uncooked rice. Please accept it. Hearing the words of the young girl, Shri Rupa Goswami opened the door to his hut and looked out. There he saw a beautiful young gopi maiden with some offerings of food. Rupa Goswami said, "Little girl! Whay have you come here?"
"Swamiji! I have only brought you some simple uncooked food."
"Why have you taken such trouble for me?"
"Baba! What trouble? I have only come to render a humble service to a saintly person."
Accepting the offering of milk, sugar and uncooked rice, Rupa Goswami said, "Young girl please take your seat, while I put these things away." The girl said, "I'm sorry, but I have some work to do." Saying this, the girl disappeared. When Rupa Goswami turned around and saw that she had gone, he was very bewildered by all this. At length, he prepared the sweet rice and offered the bhoga to his deity, Govindadeva. After some time, he gave the prasada to Sanatana Goswami, who had just arrived. While honoring prasada, Sanatana Goswami experienced an unusual and enchanting kind of joy. He asked Shri Rupa, "Where did you get this milk and rice from?" Rupa Goswami said, "A young gopi girl came by and gave it to me."

Sanatana said, "A young girl just came by all of a sudden and gave you this milk and rice?" Rupa Goswami replied, "Yes, she just came by all of a sudden. The strange thing is, I was just thinking, 'how can I make some sweet rice for Sanatana,' and she just appeared, as if by magic, with this milk and rice and some sugar." Hearing this, tears of prema began falling from the eyes of Sanatana Goswami. He said, "Can't you recognize something when it is right before your eyes? It was Shri Radha Thakurani Herself who has brought you milk and rice. By accepting service from Her we are ruined. Now we shall never attain our desired goal." And in this way, Sanatana Goswami continually condemned himself again and again for having accepted service from that person whom he most aspired to serve: Shri Radha Thakurani. This pastime of Shri Sanatana Goswami is recorded in the Bhakti Ratnakara.

The Bhakti-Ratnakara also records how, every day, Shri Sanatana Goswami would make the four mile pilgrimage around Govardhan hill, but because of his old age this was very troublesome. Still, he did not want to break his religious principles by not circumambulating Govardhan hill. And so he would suffer great physical hardship while circumambulating Govardhan. The Lord knows everything and thus could understand the pain his devotee Sanatana was experiencing. He decided to do something about this. One day, a little gopa boy came to Sanatana and said, "Baba! You are old. Don't go to such trouble to walk around Govardhan hill. Sanatan said, "This is one of the regular principles of my bhajan—I must maintain it." The boy said, "Since you are old, you may give now up this rule." Sanatana said, "I will never give up my religious principles." Krishna then told him, "Baba! Won't you honor my words?" Sanatana said, "If it is honorable, then I shall honor it." At that time, Krishna presented Sanatana Goswami with a shila, a stone, bearing the meark of his own lotus feet, and said: "This is Govardhan-shila, a piece of stone from Govardhan itself." Sanatana said, "What shall I do with it?" Shri Krishna said, "If you circumambulate this Govardhan-shila, your vow of walking all the way around Govardhan hill every day will remain intact, for by circumambuting this, you cirucmumbulate Govardhan Hill. You will thereby get the same result, keep your vow intact, and not compromise your religious principles." Shri Sanatan Goswami was silenced. He could understand that Girirāja himself had given him this shila. From that day forward, he used to circumambulate the Govardhan-shila marked with the divine marks of the lotus feet of Shri Krishna.

Following the orders of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Shri Rupa and Shri Sanatana Goswami did not climb Govardhana hill because they considered it nondifferent from Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. On some pretext, the Gopal deity granted Shri Chaitanya mahaprabhu an audience beneath the hill, and Gopala similarly favored Shrila Rupa and Sanatana Goswami. During his ripe old age, when Rupa Goswami could not go to Govadhana Hill because of invlaidity, Gopala kindly went to Mathurā and remained at the temple of Viththaleshavara for one month. It was then that Shrila Rupa Goswami could see Gopala's beauty to his heart's content.

The activites of Shrila Rupa and Sanatana Goswami while they resided in Vrindavan are described by Krishnadāsa Kavirāja Goswamī in the Chaitanya Charitamrita (CC ML 19.128—132) as follows: "The brothers actually have no fixed residence. They reside beneath trees—one night under one tree and the next night under another. Shrila Rupa and Sanatana Goswami beg a little food from the houses of brahmanas. giving up all kinds ofmaterial enjoyment, they only take some dry bread and fried chick-peas. They carry only waterpots, and they wear torn quilts. They always chant the holy names of Krishna and discuss His pastimes. In great jubliation, they also dance. They engage almost twenty-four hours daily in rendering service to the Lord. They usually sleep only an hour and ahalf, and some days, when they continuously chant the Lord's holy name, they do not sleep at all. Sometimes they write transcendental literatures about devotional service, and sometimes they hear about Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and spend their time thinking about the Lord. When the personal associates of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would hear of the activities of Rupa and Santana Goswamis, they would say, 'What is wonderful for a person who has been granted the Lord's mercy?'"

Lives of the Saints

Saranga Thakura

Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī has written: "Rāmadāsa, Kavidatta, Śrī Gopāla dāsa, Bhagavat Ācārya, and Ṭhākura Sāraṅga dāsa were all important branches of the Śrī Caitanya tree." (C.C. Ādi 10.113)

Śrī Sāraṅga Murāri Ṭhākura is also sometimes known as Sārṅga Murāri, Sārṅga Pāṇi, or Sāraṅga Dhara. He lived on the banks of the Ganges in Modradrumadvīpa in Nabadwīpa dhāma in what is now known as Māmagacchi. At present in that place there is a temple of Rādhā-Gopīnātha. The old temple was built next to an ancient Bakula tree that is supposed to have been standing since the time of Sāraṅga Ṭhākura. Recently a new temple building has been constructed there which is at present under the management of the Gaudiya Matha.

It is said that Sāraṅga Murāri Ṭhākura had vowed never to accept any disciples. But again and again he received some messages from Caitanya Mahāprabhu encouraging him to make disciples. At length, he decided to accept a disciple and said, "I shall make a disciple of the first person I see tomorrow and shall initiate him into the *mantra*. The next morning he went to the Ganges to bathe, and as he was bathing he touched a dead body with his foot. Grabbing hold of the dead body, he brought it to life again and asked it, "Who are you? What is your *gotra?*" The man gradually regained consciousness, and, finding himself in the presence of a great soul, he bowed down before Sāraṅga Ṭhākura. At last the man who had risen from the dead by the power of Sāraṅga Ṭhākura identified his caste and family background, saying, "My name is Murāri. Have mercy on me!" At that time, Sāraṅga Ṭhākura accepted him as his disciple and gave him *mantra-dīkṣā*. It is for this reason that he became famous as Sāraṅga Murāri Ṭhākura. After a few days Sāraṅga Ṭhākura trained his new disciple in the worship of his deities, Rādhā-Gopīnātha. That disciple became famous as Murāri Ṭhākura.

According to Kavikarṇapura's *Gaura-gaṇodeśa-dipikā*, "That person who was formerly the *gopī* called Nandimukhī in Vraja-līla appeared in the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya as Sāraṅga Ṭhākura."

Sāraṅga Ṭhākura's appearance day is on the fourteenth day of the dark moon in the month of Āṣāḍha and his disappearance day is on the thirteenth day of the dark moon in the month of Agrahāyaṇa.

Shrinivasa Acharaya

Shrinivasa's father's name was Shri Gangadhara Bhattacharya. Later he became known as Chaitanya Das. His wife's name was named Shri Laksmipriya. He lived on the banks of the Ganges in a village called Chakhandi Gram.

When Shri Gaurasundara ended his Nabadwip lila he went to the ashram of Keshava Bharati to accept sannyasa, news of their conversation was proclaimed far and wide. From all around thousands and thousands of people to see the sannyasa of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. At that time, from Chakhandi Gram came Gangadhara. When Shri Nimai Pandit was about to have his beautiful hair shaved off, all the devotees began weeping floods of tears.The barber was unable to do the work of shearing the Lord's hair. His eyes filled with tears, and he was unable to see. Mahaprabhu requested him to use the razor his hair. After some time, Shri Madhu, the barber did the work of shaving the Lord's beautiful hair from his head. The barber cried out in anguish, "What misery I have caused! What have I done?" and fell unconscious upon the earth. A great uproar of weeping and wailing filled all four directions. Who could console them? What a pitiful sight. The men and women there were unable to speak, and seeing this pitiful sight, the birds in the trees also fell silent.

Shri Gangadhara Bhattacharya's was shocked, and fainted upon seeing this scene. When he arose again, he was half-mad. The only sound that issued from his lips was "Shri Krishna Chaitanya, Shri Krishna Chaitanya." He returned to Chakhandi Gram, but like a madman he would only go on chanting Shri Krishna Chaitanya, Shri Krishna Chaitanya, again and again, softly to himself. His chaste and faithful wife hearing of Mahaprabhu's sannyas began overflowing with tears. All the brahmanas and their wives past their days weeping in great agony. In this way the people of Nadia gave Gangadhara Bhattacharya the name "Caitanya das." In order to take darshan of the lotus feet of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Chaitanya Das went with his wife to Jagannatha Puri.

When Chaitanya Das finally arrived in Jagannatha Puri after such a long journey and received darshan of the holy feet of Shri Chaitanya, Chaitanya Das and his wife crying tears of joy, fell before the Lord and offered their obeisances. Shri Chaitanya called them to his side and blessing them with his merciful glance spoke the following sweet words: "Jagannatha is delighted that you have come here. Go and take darshan of him. The lotus eyed Lord is ready to satisfy your innermost

heart's desire. The Lord is supremely merciful. In order to receive his mercy, you have come a long way, and he wants to satisfy your heart's desire. Go now and take darshan of Lord Jagannatha."

Shri Chaitanya Dasa and his wife went to take darshan of Jagannatha. The Lord's personal servant, Govinda, went with them. The good brahman and brahmani, upon seeing Lord Jagannatha wept tears of prema and offered many prayers and hymns from the scriptures to the Lord. After this they followed the directions the Lord had given them on where to stay, and went to the place he had provided for their stay. For a few days, Shri Chaitanya Das in great happiness remained in Jagannatha Puri.

One day, being the Paramatma in everyone's heart and therefore knowing everything, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told his servant, "Govinda! The desired son of that brahmana and his wife shall soon appear. Shrinivasa will be his name, and he will be a greatly beautiful child. Through Shri Rupa and Sanatana I will manifest the bhakti-shastras. Through Shrinivas, all these shastras will be distributed. Let that brahmana and his wife quickly return to Gauda Desh." Receiving the auspicious blessings of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with great ecstasy, Shri Chaitanya das returned to Gauda Desh. Soon, within the womb of the brahmana wife of Chaitanya Das, a child was conceived who embodied the mercy potency of the Lord. Laksmipriya's father's name was Balaram Vipra. He was a pandit and an astrologer expert in the Jyoti Shastras. He could understand that from the womb of Lakshmipriya a great soul, a mahapurush, would soon take birth. The Bhakti Ratnakara records that "On the full moon day in the month of Vaishakha, in the constellation or naksatra of Rohini, when all the stars were aligned in an auspicious way, Lakshmipriya gave birth to a son." The boy's bodily luster was as brilliant as molten gold. He had a long nose, his eyes extended to his ears, a broad chest, and arms that extended to his knees. In this way, he was seen to manifest all the bodily symptoms of a mahapurush, or great soul.

Shri Chaitanya Das offered the boy to the lotus feet of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. At the beginning of their son's birthday celebration, they gave profusely in charity to the brahmanas and their wives. All the brahmanas and their wives took great pleasure in holding the newborn child. Finally, Lakshmipriya herself took the child in her lap and Gaura-nam kirtana began. They taught the boy to chant the holy name of Gauranga. Just as the moon grows from a tiny crescent to its full and brilliant form, so the boy gradually grew up and became more briliant with each passing day. Gradually his hair-cutting ceremony and sacred

thread ceremony came and went. After this time, he went to Shri Dhananjaya Vidyavacaspati where he began studying grammar, poetry, rhetoric, and shastra. Within a short time, he became highly learned in all the different subjects he was taught, and his vision into the revealed scriptures was extraordinary.

When he was a small child, Shrinivasa received the mercy of Shri Govinda Ghosh Thakura and Narahari Sarakara Thakura. After some time, Shrinvasa's father passed away. At the disappearance of his father, Shrinivasa was devastated with grief. All the devotees did their best to pacify him, but he was unconsolable at the loss of his father. So bereaved was he that he would allow no food or drink to pass through his lips, and in this way he fasted for some time.

Bidding farewell to the devotees there, Shrinvasa and his mother left Chakhandi Gram, and after a few days, they arrived in Yajigram at the house of Shri Balaram Vipra, Shrinvas's maternal grandfather. Hearing of Shrinviasa's move to Yajigram the saintly persons who lived there became very happy. Seeing Shrinvas's profound scholarship and bhakti-prema all the pandits and brahmanas in Yajigrama were amazed. Still, the hankering within the heart of Shrinivasa was unsatisfied. He could only think day and night of seeing the lotus feet of Shri Chaitanya. By and by he grew very eager to go to Jagannatha Puri.

To take darshan of the holy feet of Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura, Shrinivasa went to Shri Khanda. Arriving there, he fell at the feet of Narahari with his mind filled with the ecstasy of love of Godhead and began rolling on the ground, his voice choked with emotion. Seeing his wonderful love for Krishna, Narahari embraced him. Shrinivasa was absorbed in remembrance of the holy name of Shri Gauranga and wept tears of joy. Then he let Narahari know of his aspiration to go to Jagannatha Puri to see the holy places of Shri Gauranga's lila. Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura, Raghunandana Thakura, and some of the other devotees who were there, upon listening to his proposal were very happy and said, "You should wait here for a few more days. Soon many of the devotees from Bengal will go to Puri. At that time you may go in their association.

Shrinivasaleft Shri Khanda and returned to Yajigram, where he told his mother of his plans for a long journey to Jagannatha Puri with the devotees. Upon hearing her son's wishes, and seeing that his mind was made up, she gave him her blessings. A few days later he set out for Puri in the company of the devotees from Bengal. Completely overwhelmed with internal joy, gradually reached Jagannatha Puri in the afternoon. That night they stayed at the house of a panda who lived near the simhadvara gates. The next morning he went to the house of Gadadhara

Pandit. Seeing the Pandit, Shrinivasa fell on the ground before his lotus feet with tears in his eyes. Gadadhara Pandit affectionately took hold of him and embraced him. As Shrinivasa was being embraced by Shri Gadadhara Pandit, he wept in separation from Shri Gauranga.

After staying in the house of Gadadhara Pandit for a day, Shrinivasa went to take darshan of Ramananda Raya, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Vakreshvara Pandit, Paramananda Puri, Shikhi Mahiti, Govinda, Shankara, and Gopinatha Acharya as well as many others who were eternal associates of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Seeing Shrinivasa, all these devotees were very happy. Seeing Shrinivasa's unprecedented Gaura-prema, the devotees could understand that he was Gaura-shakti, the energy of the Lord. They could understand that through him the message of Shri Chaitanya and the various scriptures would be preached. Knowing this, all the internal devotees of Shri Chaitanya gave various important instructions to Shrinivasa. In a few days, having seen all the important holy places of Shri Chaitanya's pastimes in Jagannatha Puri he bade farewell of the devotees there in order to return to Bengal. All the devotees affectionately embraced Shrinivasa before his departure. After bidding farewell to the devotees, Shrinivasa started down the road to Bengal. When he had gone down the road for a while, he heard that Shri Gadadhara Pandit had disappeared. Shrinivasa drowned in the ocean of separation and began weeping and wailing piteously. That night in a dream, Shri Gadadhara Pandit came to him in a dream and pacified him. After this, Shrinivasas once again headed for Bengal. On the path he heard the news that Shri Advaita Acharya and Shi Nityananda Prabhu had disappeared. Shinivasa Acharya fell down on the road, stunned. There he spent the night wetting the earth with his tears of sadness in separation. That night, out of their causeless mercy, Shri Nityananda and Shri Advaita appeared to Shrinivasa in a dream and pacified him. Gradually, Shrinvasa came to Bengal.

First he went to Shri Khanda, where he offered obeisances to the holy feet of Shri Narahari Sarakara, Raghunandana Thakura and the other devotees. Having taken their their blessings, he went on to Shri Mayapur in Navadwip. Seeing the holy land of Shri Chaitanya's birth, Shrinivasa fell to the ground his voice choked up in ecstasy. At the house of Shriman Mahaprabhu he found Vamshivadana Thakura. Shrinivasa offered his obeisances to the lotus feet of Vamshivadana. When he came to know who Vamshivadana Thakura was, he was very happy. Shrinivasa loudly cried out the holy name of Shri Chaitanya. Shrinivasa prayed to have darshan of the lotus feet of Shri Vishnupriya devi. At that time, Shri

Vishnupriya did not give him darshan. When Vamshivadana Thakura informed Shri Vishnupriya of Shrinivasas intense desire to have her darshan, and requested her again and again to meet with him, she gave her consent, and upon her order Vamshivadana Thakura brought Shrinivasa to her.

Upon seeing her, Shrinivasa fell upon the earth with tears of prema, offering prostrated obeisances. Shri Vishnupriya Thakurani gave her blessings to Shrinivasa told him to remain and take prasada.

Out of separation from Shri Gauranga, Shri Vishnupriaya Thakurani had grown thin as the waning moon of Krishna Caturdashi, when the slim lunar crescent is barely perceptible just before the dark moon. Her practice was to set aside a grain of rice for every rosary of Hare Krishna mantras she would chant. At the end of the day she would cook the rice she had set aside and offer it to her deity of Mahaprabhu. Then she would accept just enough to keep her body and soul together. In Nabadwip, Shrinivasa took darshan of many Vaishnavas including Shri Murari gupta, Shrivasa Pandit, Damodara Pandit, Shri Sanjaya, Shuklambara Brahmachari, and Gadadhara Das.

After staying for a few days in Nabadwip dham, he went to Shantipura to the house of Shri Advaita Acharya and took darshan of the holy feet of Shri Sita Thakurani, the eternal wife of Shri Advaita Acharya. Sita Thakurani, out of separation from Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, was barely keeping her body and soul together. She gave her blessings to Shrinivasa. Shrinivasa visited many other devotees in Shantipura and offered them his respects and prayers. Gradually from there he went to Khadadoha.

In Khadadoha, at the house of Shri Nityananda Prabhu, Shri Parameshvari Thakura was staying. He brought Shrinivasa before Shri Vasudha and Shri Jahnava, the wives of Nityananda, and Shri Birchandra, Nityananda's son. Shrinivasa, with tears of prem in his eyes offered his dandavats before those great souls, and, as he did so, Shri Jahnava placed her lotus feet upon his head and blessed him with the dust of her lotus feet. Everyone was very affectionate towards Shrinivasa. In this way he stayed for a few days in Khodadoha. Finally Shri Jahnava Mata ordered him to go to Vrindavana Dham. Taking her order upon his head he visited Khanakula, where he went to the house of Abhirāma Gopala. After he offered his respects to Abhiram Gopal Thakura, Abhiram Gopal gave Shrinivasa three lashes with his whip called Jaya-mangal, or "Victory of auspiciousness." His wife, Shri Malini Devi became outraged and forbade him to continue, out of compassion for Shrinivas. She held her husband's hand and forced him to stop

whipping Shrinivas. Upon being lashed by the transcendental whip of a pure devotee, Shrinivasa's body was overwhelmed with the ecstasy of Krishna prema. Shrinivasa humbly offered his prayers to Abhiram Gopala and begged his blessings to return to Shri Khanda.

In Shri Khanda, upon again seeing Narahari Sarakara Thakura and Raghunandana Thakura, Shrinivasa was very happy. Finally he returned home to Yajigrama and when he arrived at his own house again offered respects to his mother's lotus feet. He then told her of the order he had received from Shri Jahanava Devi to go to Vrindvana, and prayed for her blessings to go. His mother gave her blessings with great pleasure. Shrinivasa soon left for Vrindavana. On the way he stopped in Gaya and took darshan of the lotus feet of the Vishnu deity there at the place where Mahaprabhu met Ishavara Puri and took initiation from him.

After staying in Gaya for two or three days, he arrived in Kashi at the house of Chandrashekhara. He also met with many other devotees there. Hearing directly from Tapana Mishra and Chandrashekara about the different pastimes Mahaprabhu had performed while in Kashi, Shrinivasa swam in the ocean of nectar. After a few days he left Kashi.

Soon he arrived in Mathura. He took bath at Vishrama Ghat. It was at Vishrama Ghata that Shri Krishna rested after slaing the demonic King Kamsa. And for that reason it is known as Vishrama Ghata, or the "place of rest." Shrinivasa visited Krishna's holy birthplace and took darshan of the Adikeshava Deity and then turned towards Vrindavana. On the road to Vrindavana he met many brahmana residents of Vrindavana who told him that Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami and other great devotees had just passed away. Hearing this, he became very sorrowful. He began to weep and fell to the ground in the agony of separation. The brahmanas who were with him somehow helped him to the place where Shrila Jiva Goswami was. Shri Jiva Goswami had heard of Shrinivasa. Shrinivasa offered his respects to the lotus feet of Shri Jiva Goswami, who embraced him with great affection. After this, they both had much to say to each other. Shrila Jiva Goswami who was from Bengal wanted to hear news about the welfare of the different Gaudiya Vaishnavas, and after they talked for some time, Jiva Goswami arranged for prasada and a place to stay for Shrinivasa.

That day, Krishna Pandit, the servant of the Govinda Deity, brought prasada to Shrinivasa. Shrinivasa took prasada with Jiva Goswami himself. It was in the afternoon on the full moon day of the month of Vaishakha that Shrinivasa arrived in Vrindavana at the place of Jiva Goswami. The next morning he went with Jiva

Goswami and took darshan of the Radha Raman Deities. They also saw Gopal Bhatta Goswami. Gopal Bhatta Goswami was very happy to see Shrinivasa. Shrinivasa offered his respects to the lotus feet of Gopal Bhatta Goswami with great humility and begged him to initiate him in the divine mantra. Gopal Bhatta Goswami with great happiness agreed to initiate him. The following day, at the temple of Shri Radha-Raman, Shri Gopal Bhatta Goswami gave mantra diksha to Shrinivasa. the day after he was initiated, Shrinivasawas sent to Raghunatha Das Goswami. With great happiness, Shrinivasa went to the Radha-kunda where Raghunatha Das Goswami used to stay. There he found Krishna das Kaviraj Goswami, Raghava Pandit, and many other great devotees and offered his respects to all of them. For three days he stayed at the Radha-kunda and received many instructions about bhajan from those great souls. Having received the blessings of all of the devotees there at Radha-kunda, Shrinivasa once again returned to Vrindavan to the shelter of the lotus feet of Shri Jiva Goswami.

At length, Shri Jiva Goswami taught the Shrimad bhagavatam and the scriptures of the Goswamis to Shrinivasa. In a short time Shrinivasa knew by heart all the siddhantas of the Goswami's literature. Because of his expertise in philosophy, Jiva Goswami gave him the title "Acharya." From that day on he became famous among the Gaudiya Vaishnavas as Shrinivasa Acharya.

Shrinvasa Acharya had previously heard of Narottama Thakura, but at the ashram of Jiva Goswami he met him in person. From the time of their first meeting, Shrinivasa and Narottama became lifelong friends. Jiva Goswami ordered the two of them to wander in the forest of Vrindavana with Raghava Goswami. On the order of their guru they set about to journey through the Vrindavan forests. Shri Raghava Pandit was a South Indian brahmana, and was singlemindedly devoted to Shri Gaurasundara and was very dear to Him. Shrimad Kavi Karnapura notes in his Gaura Ganodesha Dipika: "That person who was once the dear gopi friend of Radharani and whose name was Champakalata later appeared as Shri Raghava Goswami and lived at Govardhan where he worshiped a deity of Giridhari in great ecstasy.

Shri Narahari Chakravarti dedicates five chapters of his Bhakti-ratnakara to discussing in great detail how Shrinivasa and Narottama together with Raghava Goswami wandered throughout the 64 kroshas of Mathura Mandala.

After wandering through the twelve forest of Vrindavan for some time, they again returned to Jiva Goswami. At that time, Duhkhi Krishna Das, (Shyamananda Prabhu) had just arrived from Gauda-desha. Shri Jiva Goswami

seeing him was greatly happy. Dukhi Krishnadas was the dear disciple of Shri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu. Shri Hriday Chaitanya Prabhu himself had sent Dukhi Krishna Das to study at the school of Jiva Goswami. Jiva Goswami asked him for news of the devotees in Bengal and in Utkala, inquiring about the welfare of each and every one of them.

After this Dukhi Krishna Das was introduced to Shrinivasa and Narottama. The three of them were ornamented with all good qualities and soon began a friendship that was to last the rest of their lives. The three of them cultured a deep understanding of the Goswami scriptures, studying them at the lotus feet of Shrila Jiva Goswami. In this way they stayed with Rupa Goswami who taught these faithful and dear disciples of his everything, until their understanding was perfect.

At this time, it was decided by the Goswamis of Vrindavan to send Narottama, Shrinivasa, and Shyamananda to Bengal to deliver the Goswami scriptures and preach. The three of them were extremely renounced and highly learned in the conclusions of the bhakti-rasa scriptures. After this, the three of them were called before the Coswamis, who made clear their desires for preaching the literatures. The three of them agreed with great enthusiasm to carry out the task they had been ordered to do. It was settled that the three of them would leave on an auspicious day. The Shukla-paksha day of the month of Agrahayana was chosen.

Thereafter, having first offered their respectful obeisances unto the three principle deities of Vrindavan, Shri Govinda, Gopinatha, and Madana Mohan, those three great souls, Shyamananda Prabhu, Narottama Thakura, and Shrinivasa Acharya were sent by Jiva Goswami with the Goswami sciptures to Bengal. The books were carefully packed in a trunk and loaded onto an oxcart for safekeeping. In this way they set out with the oxcart on the road to Mathura on their way to Bengal. It was a long way, and they would slowly move from one village to the next, stopping at night in a village where they would perform sankirtan, preach, take prasada and rest. Gradually the bullock cart arrived in Vanavishnupura.

Vanavishnupura was the headquarters of King Birhambir, a leader of dacoits. He heard from one of his thieves that many people were moving along the road with a chest full of jewels loaded onto a bullock cart heading towards Bengal. He reported that they had just entered Vanavishnupura. The king instructed his men to steal the chest of jewels from the bullock cart. The devotees finally arrived in Vanavishnupura just as the sun was going down. After confering with one another,

they decided to settle down for the night and rest on the banks of a sarovara in the village. Since many people lived nearby there, they could have some of them watch the bullock cart and make sure that nothing was stolen. Indeed, upon seeing the effulgence of these Vaishnavas, and after listening to their bhajan and kirtan, all the people of that village were astonished.

King Birhambir again and again sent different thieves to get news of their movements. And it came to pass by the will of providence that after many days his mind's goal was achieved. One especially dark night the devotees were sleeping peacefully by the side of a river after taking prasada, having left all the Goswami scriptures in the chest on the bullock cart. They were deep asleept. At that time, the thieves came and carefully stole away with the chest of books and hurried away. They brought the chest to King Birhambir, as he had ordered them to do. When the king saw the chest, he thought "Jewels! Treasure!" His mind was carried away by happiness. Calling the thieves before him, he rewarded them with new clothes and ornaments and commended them on their good work.

The king considered, "This chest has certainly come from the west. After many days, I have finally obtained great wealth. In this way, his joy was boundless." He had been told that some valuable jewels were inside the chest, and so he wanted that chest. King Birhambir had an astrologer in his court who had told him that what was in the chest was priceless.

In this way, when the devotees arose the following morning, they saw that the chest containing the Goswami's scriptures was no longer on the bullock cart. They felt as if their heads had been struck by a thunderbolt. They began searching about and inquiring from everyone around. But no one knew anything. They could find nothing. The three of them were close to death with depression. Some time later, when they were more calm, they said, "Who can understand the will of Govindadev? When we left on this journey we had His blessings. It was by his will that all the Goswami scriptures were put into that one chest. " In this way the devotees spoke contemplatively about the meaning of the tragedy that had befallen them. They remembered once hearing from the Goswamis that Vanavishnupura had a king who was the leader of a gang of dacoits. That king was famous for stealing all sorts of valuables from pilgrims passing on the road.

That night, the king opened the chest containing the Goswami's scriptures. After opening the box, he removed the cloth that covered what was beneath. There he saw the treasured books of the Goswamis. He opened one of the books and saw the name "Shri Rupa Goswami" written on the palm leaf. When he saw the infallibly

beautiful handwriting of Shri Rupa Goswami all the sins that he had amassed throughout his long life of crime immediately flew away from him. His heart was purified. From his pure heart arose the divine rapture of Krishna prema. Again placing the Goswami scriptures carefully within the chest, the King retired for the evening. As he was resting, he had an unusual dream. In his dream he saw a beautiful person, whose body glowed with an unprecedented effulgent as brilliant as a golden mountain. His smile was like the moon. Then that person spoke, saying, "Do not worry. Soon I shall come and we shall meet. At that time your joy shall be unceasing. Life after life you are to be my eternal servant."

When the king had seen the scriptures in the chest, he immediately began to worry, thinking to himself, "The loss of these holy scriptures is certainly causing great trouble to someone, somewhere. This will be a cause of great anxiety for me." In his dream some divine person said, "O King. Do not worry. In order to retrieve these treasured scriptures I shall soon come to meet with you. Life after life you shall be my eternal servant."

The three devotees decided that Shri Narottama Thakura should go to Kheturi Gram, Shri Shyamananda Prabhu would go to Ambika Kalna, and Shrinivasa Acharya himself would stay behind in Vishnupura, where he would go to the king's palace and retrieve the Goswami scriptures. A brahmana resident of Vishnupura named Shri Krishna Vallabha was fascinated upon seeing Shrinivasa Acharya and brought Shrinivasa Acharya to his own home where he duly worshiped with Acharya with the proper respect. At length, the Acharya initiated him into the divine mantra. There were others also who were present there who recognized Shrinivasa Acharya as their guru and accepted initiation from him.

King Birhambir always used to listen to the Bhagavatam. Hearing this, Shrinivasa Acharya wanted to go to the king's palace and give the Bhagavatam lecture. He suggested this proposal to Shri Krishna Vallabha. Shri Krishna Vallabha told him that the king had great faith in the Bhagavata and in sadhus. He said, "Let us go to the king's palace today." Hearing this, Shrinivasa Acharaya quickly went with Krishna Vallabha to the king's palace. When Raja Birhambir saw the brilliant effulgence of Shrinivasa Acharya, he fell to the ground offering his prostrated obeisances. At that time he offered Shrinivasa an elevated seat, and gragrant flower garlands. After this, Shrinivasa Acharya intoned the guru-vandana prayers to his spiritual master in a sweet voice, and began his explanation of Shrimad Bhagavatam. His recitation of the verses was wonderful, and his

explanations were even more wonderful. After hearing his explanation, the whole assembly, including the king, were melted by Krishna Prema.

It is said that "Just by seeing a great Vaishnava one is purified." The great dacoit leader was purified simply upon seeing Shrinivasa Acharya. After Shrinviasa Achatya had finished his explanations of Shrimad Bhagavatam, he began the Sankirtan of the holy name and, after some time, began dancing in the kirtan. After some time, Raja Birhambir, clutching a straw between his teeth, fell before the lotus feet of Shrinivasa Acharya and offered his prostrated obeisances in a mood of great humility and begged him for his mercy again and again. Shrinivasa Acharya took hold of him and embraced him heartily. He told him that very soon, Shri Gauranga Himself would bestow mercy upon Raja Birhambir. After this the king brought out the chest with the scriptures of the Goswamis and offered them to Shrinivasa Acharya.

Shrinivasa Acharaya could understand the meaning of Shri Gaurasundara's "boundless sweet mercy." One can see his will manifest in everything that happens. Shrinivasa Acharya gave his blessings to the king. News of all this quickly reached Shri Jiva Goswami in Vrindavana. Hearing news of all that had transpired, Jiva Gowamis and the other Goswamis were very happy and found the activities of Shrinivasa Acharya to be wonderful.

Bidding his leave of the king, Shrinivasa Acharya took the chest of books to Yajigram and told all the devotees there of what had happened. Hearing everything from Shrinivasa, the devotees were very happy. At that time he heard of the passing of Shri Vishnupriya Thakurani in Nabadwipa. In great unhappiness and distress, Shrinivasa Acharya fainted. The devotees all did their best to revive and console Shrinivasa, and after some time he came to his senses. At that time a message came from Shri Raghunandana in Shri Khanda, inviting Shrinivasa Acharya to come there. Without any delay, Shrinivasa set out for Shri Khanda. When Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura, Raghunandan Thakura and all the other eternal associates of Shri Chaitanya in Shri Khanda saw Shrinivasa Acharya they were very happy. Shrinivasa offered his respects to all of them and gave them news of the Goswamis in Vrindavana.

At this time, Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura told Shrinivasa Acharya that it was his mother's wish that Shrinivasa marry. He said, "Your mother is a great devotee. For a long time she has rendered service in Yajigrama. Whatever she orders you to do you must do. It is her wish, as it was your father's, that you must marry. Without having to hear his mother's order a second time, Shrinivasa took it

upon his head. After staying for a few more days in Shri Khanda, he went to Kanthak Nagara to visit the house of Gadadhara Dasa Thakura and take darshan of him.

After he Offered his respects to Gadadhara Das Thakura, Gadadhara Das embraced him affectionately. Gadadhara Dasa wanted to hear from Shrinivasa about all the devotees in Vrindavana, especially the Goswamis. He was curious to know from him all about the welfare of those devotees. that Shrinivasa had seen on his long journeys. After hearing everything from him Gadadhara das became very happy. The Acharaya spent a few more days with Gadadhara Das and then bade farewell to him. At the time of Shrinivasa's departure, Gadadhara Dasa blessed him, saying: "One day you will certainly taste the nectar of the Lord's own Sankirtan, surrounded by his personal associates. You have my blessings to go and marry. May it bring you auspiciousness."

Accepting the blessings and instructions of Shri Gadadhara Das, Shrinvasa Acharya returned to Yajigrama. At that time in Yajigrama Raghunandan Thakura had just arrived, to the great satisfaction of everyone. In Yajigrama lived a devotee-brahmana named Gopal Chakravarti. He had a beautiful and devoted daughter named Draupadi. Shri Raghunandana Thakura arranged she they would be joined in holy matrimony to Shrinivasa Acharya. On the day known as akshaya triti in the month of Vaishakha, the wedding was performed. The Acharya's wife's previous name was Draupadi, but after the marriage, her name became Ishvari. Previously Shri Gopal Chakravarti had taken mantra initiation from Shrinivasa Acharya. Gopal Chakravarti had two sons named Shyama Dasa and Ramachandra. They took initiation from Shrinivasa Acharya as well. Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura, hearing the news of Shrinivas Acharya's wedding was very happy.

At length, Shrinivasa Acharya began instructing his disciples in the Goswami scriptures. Dvija Haridas's sons Shridas and Shri Gokulananda also took initiation from Shrinivasa Acharya and began studying the Goswami scriptures under his guidance. Gradually Shrinivasa Acharya's influence began to spread. In a short time, many sincere and faithful souls came to him to take shelter at his lotus feet.

Shrinivasa Acharya meets Ramachandra Kaviraja

One day Shrinivasa Acharaya was in Yajigrama at his own house, where many devotees had gathered to hear him lecture on Shrimad-Bhagavatam. At that time, passing by the house of Shrinivasa Acharya was Ramachandra Kaviraja the son of Chiranjiva Sen (one of Mahaprabhu's eternal associates). He had just been

married, and he and his new bride were on their way back from the wedding. From a long way off, Shrinivasa Acharya saw Ramachandra Kaviraja, and Ramachandra Kaviraja also saw Shrinvasa Acharya from a distance. Upon seeing each other from a distance a deep mood of friendship arose within the hearts of those two eternally perfect devotees of Shri Gauranga. After seeing each other they were eager to meet one another. Shrinivasa Acharya had heard about Ramachandra Kaviraja from the local people. And Ramachandra Kaviraja had heard about Shrinivasa Acharya. In this way they met and were introduced by some of the local people.

Shri Ramachandra along with his new bride came to the house of Shrinivasa Acharya. How quickly the day passed. They spent the night where they had been staying since coming to Yajigrama, at a brahmana's house near the home of Shrinvasa Acharaya, and the following morning went to Shrinivasa Acharya and fell before his feet offering prostrated obeisances. The Acharya bade Ramachandra Kaviraja to get up from the ground, and heartily embraced him saying, "Life after life you have been my friend. Providence has brought us together again today by arranging our meeting." Both of them felt great happiness as a result of their having met. Seeing that Ramchandra had an acute and deeply learned transcendental intelligence, Shrinivasa was very happy. He began to make him hear the Goswami scriptures. After a few days the Acharya initiated him in the divine Radha-Krishna mantra.

After some time, Shrinivasa Acharya again started out for Vrindavana. Along with him were many other devotees who also wanted to go to Vrindavana. They followed the path the Acharya had previously taken, and after some time walking and walking, they finally arrived in Gaya Dham, where they took darshan of the lotus feet of the Vishnu deity. After this they went to Kashi. There Shrinivasa had darshan of Shri Chandrashekara and the other devotees of Kashi, all of whom were very happy to see Shrinivasa and embraced him with great affection.

Shrinviasa stayed in Kashi for two or three days and then left for Mathura. Upon entering Mathura, he bathed once again at Vishrama Ghata. After this, he went to the holy place of Krishna's advent within this world and saw the Adi Keshava Deity there. After this, he left Mathura for Vrindavana. Soon he arrived in Vrindavan. There, Shri Jiva Goswami was expecting him. Shrinvasa went to Shri Jiva Goswami and offered him his respectful obeisances, and Shri Jiva Goswami made him get up and then embraced him heartily. He asked for news of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas in Bengal, whom he had not seen in such a long time. Just

at this time, from Puri, Shyamananda Prabhu also arrived in Vrindavan. He offered his respects to Shri Jiva who embraced him and asked for news of the devotees in Puri. After this, Shrinivasa and Shymananda were reunited. They offered obeisances and embraced and were very happy to see each other. Then, the news came that Dvija Haridasa had just passed away and they were very unhappy. They stayed in Vrindavan with Jiva Goswami, who taught them various siddhantas, devotional conclusions, from a book that he had just completed, the Sat Sandarbha: Six Treatises. At this time Jiva Goswami had also begun work on a book called Gopal Champu. He read the invocation or mangalacaranam of that book to Shrinivasa and Shyamananda.

Shrinivasa Acharya stayed in Vrindavan with Shri Jiva Goswami associating with the other Goswamis there for a few months in great happiness. After some time, he sent to Gauda Desh for Ramchandra Kaviraja, requesting him to come to Vrindavana. Some Bengali devotees who were in Vrindavan took the message to Ramchandra. When Ramchandra Kaviraja arrived, he introduced him to Shri Jiva Goswami. Ramchandra offered his full obeisances to Shri Jiva, who made him stand and embraced him. Jiva Goswami ordered him to visit the important deities in Vrindavan, beginning with Radharamana, Govinda, and Gopinatha and to take darshan of the lotus feet of the Goswamis. Together with Shyamananda and Shrinivasa, Ramchandra did as he was ordered, and the three of them took darshan of the deities and saints of Vrindavan. Seeing the extreme devotional humility and other good qualities of Ramchandra Kaviraja, the Vrindavan Goswamis were most pleased.

Shrimad Jiva Goswami then ordered Ramchandra to take darshan of the different forests of Vrindvana. After he had seen everything, he went to Radha-kunda and took darshan of the lotus feet of Raghunath Das Goswami and Krishna Das Kaviraja Goswami. After this, upon the order of Shri Jiva Goswami, Shrinivasa Acharya and Shyamananda Prabhu set out for Gaudadesh.

Gradually they came to Vanavishnupura. When they arrived there, King Birhambir was so happy to see Shrinivasa Acharya that he began to dance. After this the king carefully worshiped Shrinivasa Acharya according to the rules of worship for the guru, then he offered him nice foodstuffs, and after this arranged for a big festival in the royal palace. Seeing the bhakti of the king, Shyamananda was amazed. At this time, Shrinivasa Acharya initiated the king in the Radha-Krishna mantra. The king's name became Shri Chaitanya Dasa The king's son, Darhihambir, also took initiation, and his name became Shri Gopal Dasa. By the

grace of Shrinivasa Acharya, the king arranged for the installation of a deity, Shri Kalachand. Shrinivasa Acharya, with his own hand, installed the deities by performing an abhishek ceremony and puja as well as all the other appropriate rituals. After staying there for some time, Shri Shyamananda Prabhu set out for Puri. Shrinivasa Acharya left for Yajigrama.

At that time, the king of Shikhareshvara, Shri Harinarayana Dev invited Shrinivasa Acharya to his own house. The eternal associates of Shrinivasa Acharya arranged for a triumphal reception for Shrinivasa Acharya there. The Acharya stayed there for a few days and spoke Bhagavat-katha that flowed as sweetly as the current of the Ganges. Many people there attained the mercy of Shrinivasa Acharya.

After staying a few days in the land of Shikheshvara, he arrived in Shri Khanda, and there he heard that on the Krishna Ekadashi day in the month of Agrahayana, Shri Narahari Sarakara Thakura entered into the Lord's unmanifest pastimes, passing away from this temporary world. Upon heraing this he fell upon the ground, unconscious. In great lamentation, he cried a river of tears. In the pain of separation he could not contain himself. Shri Raghunandana Thakura was lost in sorrow. Upon seeing Shrinivasa, he was somewhat pacified. For some days Shrinivasa stayed in Shri Khanda, before going on to Kanthak Nagara. Arriving there he heard that in the month of Kartika Gadadhara Das had passed away. Pierced by the agony of separation, Shrinivasa felt that his life had gone. In great sorrow, he somehow composed himself and returned to Yajigrama. There, when he returned to his own home he invited all the devotees to a big festival.

Some time later, on the Krishna Ekadashi in the month of Magh they had a festival honoring the disappearance of Dvija Haridasa in Kanchangari Nagara. To attend the festival Shrinivasa went to Kanchangari Nagara. At that festival there was a great crowd. It was on the day of the festival, that Dvija Haridas's sons Shri Dasa and Shri Gokulananda took initiation from Shrinivasa Acharya. After staying there for some days, Shrinivasa left and started on his way to Kheturi Gram. There, on the Phalguna Purnima day, the day of Mahaprabhu's advent, a great festival was to be held. The festival had been arranged by King Santosh Dutta. He was the son of Narottam's brother as well as Narottam's disciple. For this festival, Jahanava Devi herself, the wife of Lord Nityananda, had come. Along with her came Shri Nidhi Shri Pati Shri Krishna Mishra, Shri Gokula, Shri Raghunandana, and many other eternal associates of Mahaprabhu.

Shrinivasa Acharya did the abhisheka ceremony and the puja for the deitiy installation. When the day of the full moon in the month of Phalguna came ~~they began~~ they began the great festival of Hari Kirtana by chanting the holy name all day long. They chanted day and night, and in the midst of that great kirtan Chaitanya Mahaprabhu along with his eternal associates appeared before the devotees and revealed themselves to the sight of everyone. The next day of the festival, a great feast was held.

The names of the deities were Shri Gauranga, Shri Vallabhikanta, Shri Vrajamohana, Shri Krishna, Shri Radha Kanta, Shri Radharaman. The installation of these six deities was a great festival. The world had never seen such a great Vaishnava festival. At the conclusion of the festival, Raja Santosh Datta distributed beautiful cloth and ornaments to all the devotees. The devotees in their turn showered the king with many auspicious blessings.

After the festival, Shrinivasa Acharya and Shyamananda Prabhu went back to Yajigrama. Many Vaishanavas went with them, and when they arrived at the house of Shrinivasa they began a festival there. After some days, Narottama Thakura arrived there. After the three of them spent some time together in Yajigrama exchanging their realizations, Shyamananda Prabhu headed for Utkaladesh. Shrinivasa, Narottama, and Ramchandra Kaviraja left for Nabvadwipa. When they arrived in Mayapura, Navadwipa, at the house of Shri Gauranga, they found the Lord's ancient servant Ishan Thakura, and offered their respects to his lotus feet by falling down like rods. They all introduced themselves to Ishan and when he found out who they were he embraced all of them in the ecstasy of prema.

At this time Ishan Thakura was the only one staying in the house of Shriman Mahaprabhu. The following day, Ishan took them on parikrama, and together the three of them saw all the holy places in Nabadwipa. As he took themn from one place to the next, they were very happy to hear from Ishan of all the different pastimes the Lord performed in Nabadwipa. After he had shown them the holy places, they again offered their respects and, begging his leave, set out for Shri Khanda. Soon after this, Shri Ishan Thakura passed away from this world and entered the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord. In this way, all the eternal associates of the Lord in Nabadwipa and Mayapura gradually disappeared from the earth and entered into the Lord's unmanifest lila.

One day, Raghunandana Thakura wanted Shrinivasa to come for a visit, so he sent a devotee to carry this message to Yajigrama. Shrinivasa Acharya quickly

came to Shri Khanda and offered his respects to Raghunandana. After giving his blessings to Shrinivasa, Raghunandana said, "May you live long. Preach the mesage of Shri Gauranga far and wide." After saying this, Shri Raghunandana Thakura went before the deity and, calling his son Kanai, offered himself to the lotus feet of his Gopal-Gauranga deities. After this, the devotees lost themselves in Sankirtan for three days. At that time Raghunandana Thakura again offered himself to the deities of Narahari Sarakara Thakura, Shri Gauranga and Shri Madana Gopala, and before their merciful glance disappeared from this world.

Upon seeing the disappearance of Shri Raghunandan Thakura, his son Kanai Thakura, Shrinvasa Acharya, and the other devotees were lost in sorrow, drowning in the tears that poured from their lotus eyes in separation from that great saint. After this, Kanai Thakura arranged for a big festival. All the devotees of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu were invited from everywhere. On the day of the festival a great number of Vaishnavas arrived there and assembled together. In a big courtyard they began their complete absorption in chanting the holy name. and dancing. In that divine kirtan, Shri Raghunandana Thakura himself appeared before them, dancing. Shri Raghunandana Thakura's disappearance day is on the 14th day of the white moon in the month of Shravana. Anyone who saw or heard of this festival attained their life's success.

At the end of the festival, Shrinivasa bid goodbye and went to Vanavishnupura where he was given a royal reception at the palace of the king. The Acharya began giving class and performing kirtan at the king's house. From the four directions came many Vaishnavas, who all assembled there. The king with great affection performed all kinds of service to the devotees. In Utkala, Vanavishnupura turns into Vishnupura. Many devotees and faithful and pious people came from there to take shelter of the lotus feet of Shrinivasa Acharya.

In Radhadesh, in Gopalpur Gram lived a great devotee-brahmana named Shri Raghava Cakravarti. He had a daughter named Shri Gauranga Priya. Not having arranged for the wedding of his daughter, he was in great anxiety, and constantly worried about this. He went before the deity of Mahaprabhu and told the Lord everything, making different offerings, and falling before the lotus feet of the deity. That night that brahmana and his wife had a dream in which his daughter was given to Shrinivasa Acharya. After this wonderful dream both of them became very happy. Then again they began to worry that such a thing was impossible.

After thinking this over for some time, Raghava Chakravarti went quickly to Shrinivasa Acharya. After offering his respects to the Acharya, Raghava

Chakravarti with folded hands stood before him. Understanding his desire, Shrinivasa Acharya smiled slightly. He offered Raghava Chakravarti a seat and inquired about the reason for his visit. After remaining silent for some time, the brahmana finally spoke, saying, "I have come to submit a suggestion at your lotus feet, but I cannot find the audacity to express it, out of awe for Your Reverence. If you can reassure me that I have nothing to fear in speaking I shall tell you why I have come." The Acharya said, "You have nothing to fear. Please speak your mind." At that time the brahmana offered Shrinivasa Acharya his daughter's hand in marriage. When he heard this, the Acharya smiled slightly. Upon hearing of all this, the devotees present there became very happy. At last Shrinivasa Acharya agreed to wed the daughter of Raghava Chakravarti.

With great pomp, Mahārāja Birhambir made arrangements for the wedding of Shrinivasa Acharya. When the stars were auspicious, Shri Raghava Chakravarti, having endowed his daughter with beautiful garments and ornaments came to Shrinivasa Acharya and offered her hand to him. After marrying Shrimati Gauranga Priya, Shrinivasa Acharya returned with his new bride to Yajigrama. Exactly at that time the divine energy of Nityananda—Shri Jahnava Devi had just arrived at the house of Shrinivasa Acharya, having returned from a pilgrimage to Vrindavana. Seeing her, the Acharya's happiness knew no limits. With great respect, he took the dust from her lotus feet, offered her the seat of honor and, after worshiping her, ~~after which he~~ bade his new bride, Gauranga Priya, offer her respects and prayers to the lotus feet of Jahnava Mata.

When Shri Jahnava Mata, who is known as Bhakta-Svarupini—the personification of Bhakti— saw the good character and beauty of the young bride She embraced her with great affection. With much happiness, She remained in the house of Shrinivasa Acharya for some days, after which she again returned to her village, Khorodoha Gram. In Yajigram, Shrinivasa Acharya accepted many disciples. He would often discuss the shastras and perform Sankirtan until his voice was hoarse and he could no longer speak. In Yajigrama, Shrinivasa Acharya experienced great ecstasy in discussing the Goswami scriptures, in studying them and in teaching them to others. In this way he would pass his days in great happiness. Seeing the Acharya's devotional opulence and expansive capacity for preaching, everyone was amazed. By his influence many important atheists cmae and surrendered at his lotus feet.

Shrinivasa Acharya, Shri Narottama and Shri Ramchandra Kaviraj were of one heart and mind. Shrila Narottama Thakura has written *doya kore shri acharya,*

prabhu shrinivasa—ramachandra mage narottamo das: "O Master Shrinivasa, be merciful to me! Narottama prays for the association of Ramchandra Kaviraja."

Shrinivasa Acharya had three sons and three daughters. The names of his daughters were Krishna Priya, Hemalata, and Phulapi Thakurani. His sons names were Vrindavan Vallabha, Radha Krishna, and Shri Gita Govinda. Shri Gita Govinda son was Krishna Prasada. His son was Jagadananda. Jagadananda Thakura had two wives. His first wife's son was Yadavendra and his second wive's sons were Radha Mohana, Bhuvana Mohana, Gaur Mohan, Shyam Mohan and Madan Mohan. The descendant's of Bhuvan Mohan at present live in Murshidabad in Manikyahar Gram.

Shyamanda Prabhu

"Simply by accepting that the associates of Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu are eternally perfect one may attain the service of Krishna in Vrindavana."—Narottam Das Thakura.

Shri Shyamananda, Shrinvasa and Shri Narottama Dasa Thakura are all eternal associates of Shri Gaurasundara. For the purpose of preaching the holy message of Sri Caitanya all over the earth they appeared within this world.

Shri Shyamananda Prabhu was born in Utkala, in a place called Dharenda Bhadura Pura. His father's name was Shri Krishna Mandal. His mother's name was Shri Durika. Shri Krishna Mandal, who was in the dynasty of the Six Gopas, had sired many sons and daughters who had passed away before this son took his birth. Because of the great misfortune which had befallen his family, Shri Krishna Mandal named the boy Dukhi. Everyone said that the boy would become a great person, a Mahapurush. On an auspicious moment on the full moon day of the month of Caitra, he appeared within this world by the mercy of Lord Jagannatha. Because he had come to preach the glories of Jagannatha, the Lord Himself protected him as he grew up. The boy was so beautiful he was like cupd himself; all eyes were fixed upon him.

Gradually it was time for the child's "grain-eating ceremony" (that time at which a child is first offered solid food.), and soon after that he began going to school. Seeing the amazing brain this child had, the scholars were astonished. In a short time, the boy learned Sanskrit grammar, poetry, and rhetoric. And soon after this he began seriously studying the scriptures. Upon hearing the glories of Sri Caitanya and Nityananda from the mouths of the local devotees, the boy developed a powerful desire to take shelter at his lotus feet. His father, Shri Krishna Mandala, was a great devotee of Krishna. Seeing his son always engrossed in thoughts of Gaura-Nityananda, he told him to take mantra initiation.

The boy said, "Hriday Caitanya Prabhu is my guru, he lives in Ambika Kalna. His guru is Gauridas Pandit. Those two great brothers, Shri Gaura and Nityananda always reside in his home. If you give the order, I will go to him and become his disciple.

Shri Krishna Mandal said, "My boy! That is a long way away! How will you get there?"

Dukhi said, "Father, many people from here will soon go to Gauda-desh to bathe in the Ganges. When they go, I will go with them."

For a long time, his father thought this over, and finally gave his permission. After receiving the blessings of his father and mother he began his journey to Gaudadesh. Gradually he came to Nabadwip and Shantipur, and finally arrived in Ambika Kalna. Upon reaching Ambika Kalna, he began inquring from the local people where the house of Gauridas Pandit was. He paying his obeisances outside the temple of Sriman Mahaprabhu at the house of Gauridas Pandit. There he found Hridaya Caitanya Prabhu. Hridaya Caitanya, upon seeing the boy, said, "Who are you?"

Dukhi said, "I want to render service at your holy feet. I have come a long way—from Dharenda Vahadur Pura. I was born in the dynasty of the Six Gopas. My father's name is Krishna Mandal. My name is Dukhi."

Hridaya Caitanya was pleased with the sweet words of this young boy. He said, "From now on your name is Krishna Das."

From that day on, Shri Krishna Das assiduously served his guru. Shri Hridaya Chaitanya waited for an auspicious day and soon initiated him in the mantram. Krishna das soon became fixed in his service. Seeing Krishna das's determined service, his bhakti, and his deep intelligence and understanding, Hridaya Caitanya ordered him to go to Vrindavan to seek out Jiva Goswami. He ordered him to to study the scriptures of the Goswamis and their associates under the guidance of Jiva Goswami.

Shri Krishnadasa bowed his head and accepted his guru's order to leave for Vrindavan, and on an auspicious day, he began his journey. At that time, Shri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu gave many messages to Krishna dasa to carry to the residents of Vrindavana. He requested him to communicate his dandavats and respects to the lotus feet of the six Goswamis. Dukhi Krishna das first went to Nabadwip Dhama. There he asked the local people where he could find the old house of Jagannatha Mishra, and if he might be allowed to enter that house. Arriving at the house of Sri Gauranga, he found Ishan Thakura and offered full obeisances and respectful prayers to him. Ishan was very old. He asked Krishnadas, "Who are you?" Krishnadas explained who he was. Hearing his story, Ishan bestowed his blessings upon Krishnadas. After spending a few days in Nabadwip, Krishnadas turned his sweet face towards Vrindavan and continued on his journey.

On his way he came to Gayadham to take darshan of the lotus feet of the Vishnu deity there, where Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had taken initiation from Ishvara Puri. Remembering how Ishvara Puri had given the mantra to the Lord, he became overwhelmed by ecstasy. After this, he went to Benares, Kashidhama.

There he took darshan of the holy feet of Tapana Mishra, Chandrashekhara, and many other devotees, offering prayers and obeisances to all of them. They all bestowed innumerable blessings upon Krishnadasa, and he continued on his way to Mathura. After a long time, he finally entered Mathura. There he bathed in Vishrama-ghata, took darshan of the Adikeshava deity, and, upon visiting the place where Shri Krishna appeared within this world became choked up with prema. Thereafter he headed in the direction of Vrindavana.

After finding out the exact location of Shri Jiva Goswami's bhajan-kutir from the local people, he sought out Jiva Goswami. Arriving at his bhajan-kutir, he offered his dandavats and respects to Jiva Goswami. Jiva Goswami asked who he was, and Krishnadas told him everything. He explained how he was a disciple of Hridaya Caitanya, and how Hridaya-Caitanya had sent him to Jiva Goswami for instruction in the scriptures. Jiva Goswami had previously been told by Hridaya Caitanya, "I have a disciple named Dukhi Krishna Dasa. I am offering him to you. Teach him well in Krishna consciousness. When his mind is fixed in Krishna consciousness, after he has studied the scriptures carefully under guidance for some time, you may send him back to me."

Upon knowing that Dukhi Krishnadasa had been sent by Hridaya Caitanya to work under his direction, Shri Jiva Goswami was very happy. Krishnadasa was under his protection. Shri Krishna dasa carefully served Jiva Goswami and studied the scriptures of the Goswamis very seriously. At that time Shrinivas Acharya and Narottama das Thakura also came to study the Goswami scriptures under the authority of Jiva Goswami. Krishnadas would meet with them and study the scriptures together with Srinivasa Acharya and Narottama das Thakura.

Krishnadasa prayed for service that would bring him closer to Jiva Goswami. When Jiva Goswami saw this, he said with joy, "Every day you must draw some water from the Kanana-Kunja." From that day on, Dukhi Krishna das with great affection and eagerness would go to that Kunja to fill Jiva Goswami's waterpot. The opportunity to serve Jiva Goswami in this way gave Krishnadas's life new meaning. By drawing water for Jiva Goswami every day Krishnadas felt a transformation within himself. He would became joyful, and his eyes would fill with tears of ecstasy. Whenever he would hear the name of Radha and Govinda loudly chanted in kirtan and whenever he would remember their divine pastimes, he would become dumbstruck with wonder. From time to time he would notice a girl who seemed to be a beautiful princess drawing water from the same Kunja and carrying it on her head. Brahma and Siva would be enchanted by her beauty. In

this way, Dukhi Krishnadas continued his service of visiting the Kunja and drawing water for Jiva Goswami. His service certainly pleased the prince and princess of Vraja, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna, so much so that they wanted to reveal themselves to Krishnadas. One day Krishnadasa was performing his regular duty of filling the waterpot from the Kunja. He was fully absorbed in the samadhi of Krishna prema. At that time he saw in the water beneath his pot a wonderfully shining bangle, an anklet. Upon seeing it he was astonished by its beauty and overwhelmed by transcendental ecstasy. He reached his hand within the waters of the Kunja and pulled out this unusual bangle. Touching it to his head, he felt a wave of transcendental ecstasy. Then, finding a piece of cloth that appeared to be the border of a woman's scarf attached to the bangle, he thought to seek out the owner of the bangle in order to return it.

In that place, that very morning, seeing that the bangle from the left foot of Shri Radha Thakurani was missing, her gopi friends were dumbstruck. Shri Radha Thakurani said, "Last night while I was dancing with Krishna by the side of the Kunja, the bangle must have fallen in the Kunja; go there, and after finding it bring it to me. Vishakha devi went to the banks of the Kunja and began searching and searching for the bangle. As she was searching, she came upon Dukhi Krishna das, who at that time was filling his water pot at the Kunja.

Vishakha devi asked him, "Have you found a bangle near here?" Dukhi Krishnadasa seeing this beautiful girl who appeared to be a goddess from heaven was dazzled by her brilliance. Hearing the ambrosial words from this immortal goddess, he was struck dumb with the ecstasy of love of Godhead. Vishakha devi again asked him, "Have you found a bangle near here?" Dukhi Krishna das humbly offered his respectful obeisances, and meekly said, "Yes, I have it. Please tell me, who are you? "

Vishakha said, "I am the daughter of a gopa."

"Where do you live?"

"I live in this village."

"Is the bangle yours?"

"No, it's not mine. At my house there is a newly maried girl...."

"How was it lost here?"

"...Yesterday when she was picking flowers here at the Kunja, it somehow slipped off her foot and she lost her bangle in the water. I have come here to find her bangle. Wait here, and I will bring her to you."

A little while later, Shri Radha Thakurani came with Vishakhadevi and hid behind a tree. Vishakha devi said, "O devotee! She has come for her bangle." From a

distance Dukhi Krishnadas could see the brilliant effulgence of the daughter of King Vrishabhanu, and felt as if his soul had been stolen from his body. In great transcendental bliss he gave the bangle to Vishakhadevi. At that time he had some intuition that a great mystery was being revealed to him. With his eyes fille dwith the tears of krishna prema, he fell to the ground and offered his prostrated obeisances in full submission. His voice was choked up in ecstasy. At that time Vishkaha devi said, "O best of the devotees, my girlfriend would very much like to show her gratitude by granting you a benediction. You may ask for whatever you want."

Dukhi Krishnadas replied, "There is nothing that I want; I only pray to take the dust of her lotus feet."

Vishakha devi replied, "Take bath in this Kunda." Dukhi Krishnadasa went to bathe in the Kunda, he offered his obeisances, and then, when he immersed himself in the water he assumed the form of a beautiful girl. Returning to Vishakhadevi, Dukhi Krishnadas offered respects to her. Vishakhadevi took brought this new gopi to Shri Radha Thakurani. The new gopi offered her obeisances in the dust of the lotus feet of Shri Radha. The sakhis seated the new gopi in their midst. At that time, Shri Radharani applied some kumkum to the bangle and made a tilak mark on the head of the new gopi, saying "This tilak must remain on your forehead. From this day on, your name will be Shyamananda. Now go." At this, Radha Thakurani, along with all her gopi friends vanished. Dukhi Krishnadas's samadhi broke. In the water he could see in his reflection the effulgent tilak mark the bangle had left on his forehead.

His heart was filled with wonder at the sight, and he thought to himself, "What have I seen!" Saying this, he began to weep with joy. Thereafter, offering hundreds and hundreds of prayers in the name of Shri Radha Thakurani, he returned to the lotus feet of Shri Jiva Goswami.

Seeing the new tilak mark that shined so brilliantly on the forehead of Dukhi Krishna das, Jiva Goswami was dumbstruck. He inquired as to its origin. Dukhi Krishna das bowed before his master and with his eyes filled with tears, he related the entire story to Jiva Goswami. Hearing this, Jiva Gsowami was supremely happy. He said, "Don't reveal the story of this miracle to the people in general." From this day on your name will be Shyamananda.

Noticing the change in Dukhi Krishnadas's name and tilak, the Vaishnava community began to talk about him. Gradually word reached Ambika Kalna in Gauda desh. Hearing that his disciple had changed his name and tilak, Hridaya

Caitanya became angry. He quickly left for Vrindavana. When he arrived at the place where Krishnadas was staying, Krishnadas fell before his gurudev's lotus feet, offering his dandavats. Shri Hridaya Caitanya, seeing the new tilak on his disciple's forehead, became very angry and said, "Your conduct is abominable; you are disgracing me!" In this way he chastised Dukhi Krishna Das and struck him again and again as the Vaishnavas did their best to pacify Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu. Dukhi Krishna Das bore all his guru's chastisement with a cheerful face, for he knew that he had never left the service of his guru maharaja.

That night, Shri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu had a dream in which he saw Shri Radha Thakurani. Shrimati Radharani scolded Hridaya Chaitanya, saying: "Because Shri Dukhi Krishna das has pleased me greatly I have given him this new name and tilak. Why have you instructed him differently?" Hridaya Chaitanya fell at the feet of the princess of Vraja praying for forgiveness, realizing that he had committed a great offense.

The next morning Shri Hridaya Chaitanya called Shyamananda Prabhu to his side and affectionately embraced him again and again. With tears of ecstasy in his eyes he told his disciple: "You are most fortunate." A few days later Shri Hridaya Chaitanya left Vrajadhama. A few days later, Jiva Goswami ordered Shyamananda Prabhu to return to Gauda Desh.

Shyamanda Prabhu, Shrinivasa Acharya, and Narottama das Thakura in great happiness had spent many days studying the Goswami scriptures under the tutelage of Shri Jiva Goswami and moving through Vrindavana as humble beggars, practicing Madhukari. These three devotees practiced their madhukari and performed their bhajan as one. In this way, they were very fixed and determined in their devotional service.

In this way, having been invited to do so by the goswamis the three of them went to preach the message of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu especially as found in scriptures of the Goswamis. One day, Jova Goswami called the three of them together and let them know how to fulfill the will of the Goswamis. The three of them bowed their heads and receiving the orders of Jiva Goswami with great respect. After this, on an auspicious day, after seeing Jiva Goswami and having been entrusted by him with the scriptures of the Goswamis, the three of them started for Gauda-desh.

On the way, the King of Vanavishnupura, Birhambir had their scriptures stolen by some of his men. For the purpose of recovering the stolen scriptures, Srinivas Acharya stayed behind. Shri Narottam Thakura went on to Kheturigram and

Shyamananda Prabhu returned to Ambika Kalna. Upon arriving in Ambika Kalna, Shyamananda Prabhu offered his respects at the lotus feet of Hridaya Chaitanya. The two of them embraced each other with great joy and affection, and Hridaya Chaitanya inquired after the welfare of the great devotees and goswamis in Vrindavan. Upon hearing of the theft of the Goswamis scriptures, Hridaya Chaitanya was deeply shocked and disappointed. Soon Shyamananda was once again offering serving the lotus feet of his gurudeva Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu. After a few days, Shyamananda Prabhu became completely absorbed in guruseva and his happiness grew day by day. Almost all of the personal associates of Shri Caitanya in Utkala desh had by that time one by one disappeared and entered into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord. The preaching of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's message had almost disappeared. Shri Hridaya Chaitanya, upon hearing all this became especially concerned. At that time he ordered Shri Shyamananda Prabhu to go to Utkala desh and preach the message of the Goswamis and the teachings of Shri Chaitanya. As he was leaving his gurudeva behind, Shyamananda felt great pain within his heart. Understanding his heart, Hridaya Chaitanya called Shayamananda to him and made him understand his concern. Having no other course open to him, Shyamananda Prabhu left for Utkala taking his guru's orders on his head. On his way to Utkala, he passed his old village of Dharenda Bahadurpur. Seeing their own dear Dukhi returning home after having been gone for so long, the townspeople were extremely happy. For a few days he stayed there and preached the holy gospel of Shri Chaitanya. Many people heard him and were enchanted by him and took shelter at his lotus feet.

Thereafter he came to a town called Dandeshwar. There Shri Krishna Mandala had formerly lived. Shyamananda Prabhu blessed the town of Dandeshwar and the devotees who lived there by his holy association, to the extreme happiness of all of them. For many days he preached Harikathā and held a great festival there. Many people, upon hearing the divine message of Shyamananda Prabhu, were charmed by his saintliness and became his disciples. Finally, Shyamananda Prabhu arrived in Utkala, sanctifying the earth there with his holy presence and again he began preaching the message of Shri Chaitanya everywhere.

On the banks of the Suvarna-rekha river lived ~~was~~ a pious zamindar by the name of Shri Achyutadeva. Rasikānanda was the name of his only son. From the time he was a little boy, he was a paragon of Krishna-bhakti. For the sake of his education his father had engaged some learned scholars to teach him. Rasikananda would study at the place of the Pandits. But he had no interest in wordly knowledge. In

everything he would study he would find Hari-bhakti to be the ultimate conclusion. grew anxious to take shelter of the lotus feet of a Vaishnava guru. One day he was sitting alone, thinking. At that time he heard a divine voice say, "Rasikananda! Don't sit there brooding. Very soon a great devotee, a mahabhagavat named Shyamananda Prabhu will arrive here; go to him and take shelter of his lotus feet." Hearing that divine voice, he became somewhat encouraged. From that time on, he became very eager to see Shyamananda Prabhu and was always looking down the road for his arrival.

A few days later Shri Shyamananda Prabhu along with his disciples made his auspicious arrival at the house of Rasikananda dev in the village called Rohini on the banks of the Suvarna-rekha. Shri Rasikananda dev's bliss knew no bounds. He offered his full obeisances in a mood of great humility and took Shri Shyamananda Prabhu within his house, where he offered him the traditional puja, and made all his friends, relatives, and children surrender at Shyamananda's lotus feet. It was arranged that on an auspicious day, Shyamananda Prabhu would initiate Rasikananda dev Prabhu into the Radha-Krishna mantra. They began the chanting of Hare Krishna in sankirtan in the home of deva with all the other devotees, inviting all the friends and relatives to take part. Everyone in the village engaged in Sankirtan-yajna, and took darshan of Shyamananda Prabhu. Amazed by his wonderful explanations of the message of Gaura-Nityananda, they all took shelter of his lotus feet. In this way, the town of Rohini had many disciples of Shri Shyamananda Prabhu.

In the town of Rohini was a big yogi named Damodara. One day he went to take darshan of Shri Shyamananda Prabhu. From a long way off he say a divine effulgence as bright as the sun emanated from Shyamananda Prabhu blinding his vision. Thereafter, as he approached that great acarya, he fell at his lotus feet and took shelter ther, offering many prayers in submission. Returning the respect shown to him by the yogi Shyamananda Prabhu with tears in his eyes, said, "If your holiness wishes to develop divine purity, please just always chant the holy names of Gaura and Nityananda. The Lord is supremely merciful. If you only do this, He will bestow Krishna-prema upon you. " Hearing what Shyamananda Prabhu had said, Yogi Damodara's heart melted. He replied, "If you will kindly give me your mercy, I shall worship the lotus feet of Gaura-Nityananda from now on." Shyamananda Prabhu gave the yogi his blessings, and bestowed his transcendental mercy upon him. Yogi Damodara became a great devotee of Shri Shri Gaura Nitai.

He used to constantly chant the holy name of Gaura and Nityananda with tears of joy pouring from his eyes.

In Balaram Pura lived many rich people. Hearing the glories of Shyamananda Prabhu the people there became very anxious to see him. The pious, faithful, and saintly people there began to pray with great earnestness for Shyamananda Prabhu to come and visit Balaram Pura. Soon, Shyamananda Prabhu gave them his mercy. He promised to respond to the invitation. Not long after this, Shyamananda Prabhu arrived in Balarama Pura with adev and Yogi Damodara, as well as many of his other disciples and devotees. The ecstasy of the saintly persons in Balaram Pura was boundless. They offered puja to the lotus feet of Shyamananda Prabhu, and conducted their bhajan in a very beautiful way, observing all the proper rules and regulations of the shastras. A few days later they held a big kirtan and hari-katha festival in Balarama Pura. Many people came and surrendered at the lotus feet of Shri Shyamananda Prabhu.

After this Shyamananda Prabhu went to Nrishinga Pura. In Nrishinga Pura there was quite a large faction of atheists, agnostics, and blasphemers. After a few days, Shyamananda Prabhu held a sankirtan festival. The agnostics and atheistic pandits went to see Shyamananda Prabhu and listened to his sweet and nectarean explanations of Hari-katha. By hearing his words, their hearts were moved. They accepted the shelter of Shyamananda Prabhu's lotus feet.

Day after day the news of Shyamananda's glories reached Utkala. From Nrishinga Pura, Shyamananda Prabhu went to Shri Gopi Vallabha Pura. There many wealthy people lived. After taking darshan of his lotus feet, they were astonished. Almost all of them accepted shelter at the lotus feet of Shri Shyamananda Prabhu. They prayed at his feet that he might install some deities, that they may engage in deity worship. They begged him with great earnestness to do this. Soon thereafter, the devotees had established a temple of the Lord with a kirtan hall, a shelter for bhoga to be kept, and a special kitchen where the Lord's meals could be prepared, as well as an ashram where the deities servants could live, and a guest house for visiting Vaishnavas. Near the temple they also constructed a small pond and beautiful gardens. Soon thereafter a great festival was held, and at that time Shri Shyamananda Prabhu installed the deities: Radha Govinda. When the installation ceremonies and festival were concluded, Shyamananda Prabhu left for his hometown of Utkala. Seeing the charming beauty of the Radha-Govinda deities, everyone felt peace in their hearts. After Shyamananda Prabhu had left for Utkala,

the residents of Gopi Vallabha Pura entrusted the responsibiity of service to the Deities to Rasikananda Prabhu.

Ariving in Utkala Pura, Shri Shyamananda Prabhu preached the message of Gaura Nityananda, and finally, returning to Ambika-Kalna, he payed his respects at the lotus feet of Shri Hridaya Chaitanya. Having offered his respects and prayers to Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu, he told him all about his successful preaching of the message of Gaura Nityananda throughout Utkala, Dandeshwar, Rohini, Balaram Pura, Nrishinga Pura, and Gopi Vallabha Pura. Hearing of the victories of his disciple, Shri Hridaya Chaitanya affectionately embraced Shyamananda Prabhu.

After some time Shri Shyamananda Prabhu was invited to the famous festival in Kheturigram, the birthplace of Narottam das Thakura. After getting this invitation, Shyamananda Prabhu, along with his disciples, set off in the direction of Kheturigram. After arriving in Kheturigram, he found his old lifelong friends, Narottam Thakura and Shrinivas Acharya. Heartily embracing one another they floated in the waves of happiness. At that festival, Jahnava Mata, Shri Raghunandan Thakura, Shri Achyutananda, and Shri Vrindavana Das Thakura, other eternal associates of Shri Gaurachandra, as well as many great souls and important devotees graced everyone there by their auspicious presence. When the festival had come to an end, Shri Shyamananda Prabhu bade farewell to all the assembled devotees and again turned his face in the direction of Utkala in order to make his return journey.

On his way back to Gauda Desh, he stopped off in the town of Kanthak Nagara at the house of Gadadhara Das Thakur, in Yajigrama at the house of Shrinivas Acharya, and in Shri Khanda at the house of Raghunandana Thakura. After this time, many of the eternal associates of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu passed away from this earth and entered into the eternal unmanifest pastimes of the Lord. After some time, Shyamananda reached Utkala. Moving from one devotee's house to the next, he went from one town to the next, and graced many devotees with his blessings. Soon he arrived in Shri Gopi Vallabha Pura. At this time he heard news of the passing away of his guru, Shri Hridaya Chaitanya. Hearing this tragic news, Shri Shyamananda Prabhu fainted. After regaining consciousness he wept and wept for a long time. He fell into a state of complete anxiety, disappointement and bewilderment. That night, however, he had a dream of Hridaya Chaitanya, and was encouraged by him to preach.

From Utkala desh, the glories of Shyamananda Prabhu were preached to the four directions. As a result of his influence the constant worship and service of Gaura and Nityananda was established far and wide. Rasikananda,. Shri Murari, Radhananda, Purushottama, Manohara, Cintamani, Balabhadra, Shri Jagadishvara, Gadadhara, Anandananda and Shri Radha Mohan and others were the dearmost confidential disciples of Shyamananda Prabhu.

Shrila Shymananda Prabhu, having been successful in his many preaching campaigns returned to Gopi Vallabha Pura, and there, after some days a big festival took place. After that, in the month of Asarh, on the day of Krishnapratipada the great acharya, Shyamananda Prabhu entered into the eternal lila of the Lord. His samadhi may be found in Gopi Vallabha Pura, where the service of his deity goes on to this day.

Sita Thakurani

Shri Sita Thakurani is to be worshiped just as much as Sachidevi herself, as the mother of the universe. She is the eternal wife of Shri Advaita Acharya. She was the daughter of Shri Nrishinga Baduri. She was married to Shri Advaita Acharya in Phuliya Nagara. After their wedding, Advaita Acharya went to Nadiya, to live in Shantipura. Sita Thakurani was always absorbed in vatsalya prema for Shri Gaurasundara Prabhu, and, out of parental concern used to instruct Jagannatha Mishra on how to care for the boy. Shri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Goswami has described the birth celebration at the house of Jagannatha Mishra upon the advent of the Lord, giving special attention to the position of Shri Sita Thakurani. Advaita Acharya's wife, worshipable by all the three worlds was Sita Thakurani. Taking the Acharya's orders on her head, she had come to take a look at this new child, this jewel of jewels, and to offer him presents.

On the eve of his son's advent Shri Jagannatha Mishra, seeing the imminent signs of his child's arrival, sent word to Advaita Acharya in Shantipura that the long-awaited child was being born. Hearing news of the advent of this unprecedented child, Advaita Acharya floated inthe waves of ecstasy. With Shri Haridasa Thakura, he went to bathe in the river, and, after much dancing and song, he sent his wife to go quickly to Mayapura in Navadwipa.

According to Gaura-Ganodesh Dipika, Shri Sita Thakurani is Yogamaya. The Gaura-Parshada-Charitvali says that in Krishna Lila, she was Purnamasi, the mother of Sandipani Muni, grandmother of Madhumangal and Nandimukhi and a disciple of Narada Muni. (Gaura-Ganodesha-dipika, however, says that Paurnamasi in Krishna-lila became Shri Govinda Acharya in Chaitanya lila.)In Dvapara-yuga, during the celebration of Krishna's birth ceremony, she was present in the house of Nanda, and at that time gave Nanda and Yashoda many instructions on how to care for the child. The Chaitanya Charitamrits gives the following account of Sita Thakurani's visit to the house of Jagannatha Mishra after the birth of the Lord:

"One day, shortly after Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was born, Advaita Acharya's wife, Sitadevi, who is worshipable by the whole world, taking permission of her husband, went to see that topmost child with all kinds of gifts and presents.

She brought different kinds of golden ornaments, including banlges for the hand, armlets, neclaces, and anklets. There were also tiger nails set in gold, waist decorations of silk and lace, ornaments for the hands and legs, nicely printed silken saris and a child's garment, also made of silk. Many other riches, including gold and silver coinds, were also presented for the child. Riding in a palanquin covered with cloth and accompanied by maidservants, Sita Thakurani came to the houe of Jagannatha Mishra, bringing with her many auspicious articles such as fesh grass, paddy, gorocana, turmeric, kunkuma, and sandalwood. All these presentations filled a big basket. When Sita Thakurani came to the house of Sachidevi, bringing with her many kinds of eatables, dresses, and other gifts, she was astonished to see the newly born child, for she appreciated that except for a difference in color, the child was directly Krishna of Gokula Himself. Seeing the transcendental bodily effulgence of the child, each of His nicely constructed limbs full of auspicious signs and resembling a form of gold, Sita Thakurani was very much pleased, and because of her maternal affection, she felt as if her heart were melting. She blessed the newly born child by placing fresh grass and paddy on His head and saying, "May You be blessed with a long duration of life." But being afraid of ghosts and witches, she gave the child the name Nimai. On the day that the mother and son took bath and left the maternity room, sita Thakurani gave them all kinds of ornaments and garments, and then also honored Jagannatha Mishra. then Sita Thakurani, being honored by mother Sachidevi and Jagannatha Mishra, was greatly happy within her mind, and thus she returned home."

From that day on, Sita Thakurani would often come to Mayapura from Shantipura, in order to teach Sachimata how to care for the new baby. She would give her many different instructions on how to raise children. And after helping with the child in this way, she would return to Shantipura. When it came time for the child's birthday ceremony, Jagannatha Mishra and Sachidevi let the worshipable Sita Thakurani be the first to offer the child his new clothes.

Advaita Acharya Prabhu also had a house in Navadwipa. There he would live from time to time and discuss Krishna-katha with the devotees headed by Shrivasa, diving and surfacing in the waves of joy until the break of dawn. After Shri Gaurasundara's appearance, all the devotees prayed together with Shri Advaita Acharya and Sita Thakurani that the child might live long in Mayapura and have good fortune.

Sita Thakurani and Sachidevi were of one mind; the baby Nimai was their life and soul. Every day Sita Thakurani would go to the house of Sachidevi and help her with the care and nurturing of the boy. In the house of Jagannatha Mishra, the divine child increased the pleasure of the eyes and minds of all the devotees, just as the waxing moon gradually grows more brilliant with each passing day.

After several years, when Jagannatha Mishra's son Vishvarupa—Nimai's older brother—had grown up, he suddenly took sannyasa. The grief and agony of Jagannatha Mishra and Sachidevi upon their son's leaving was great. Gaurasundara was also dismayed and unhappy at his brother's separation. At that time Advaita Acharya and Sita Thakurani consoled Jagannatha Mishra and Sita Thakurani, and helped take care of Nimai.

Shrivasa Pandit's wife Malini Devi also was always very affectionate towards the child, nurturing him and caring for him. She and Sachidevi were of one mind in doing this.

After exhibiting his childhood pastimes, Nimai gradually progressed into his Kishora-lila, or pastimes of youth. After some time, he went to Gaya and revealed his true form and real purpose. Having returned from Gaya he gathered all the devotees at the house of Shrivasa Angan for the purpose of beginning kirtan. At that time, Advaita Acharya brought Sita Thakurani from Shantipura to Mayapura, and, having arrived there was the first to worship the lotus feet of Shri Chaitanya.

Gradually Shri Gaurasundara began, in Navadwipa, to unfold his kirtan pastimes, wishing to deliver the fallen souls. As time went by he took sannyasa and turned his face towards Vrindavan, and ran off, half mad into the jungle in search for Shri Krishna. Upon hearing this, Shri Sita Thakurani spent four days with Sachidevi, who, plunged in the darkness of separation as if the sun had left the sky forever, lay fallen on the ground like one near death.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, being bound by the ropes of love, was unable to go to Vrindavan, but was drawn to return to Shantipura. When he arrived in Shantipura, Advaita Acharya and Sita Thakurani felt as if their life has returned. After having fasted for four days, Shri Gaurasundara accepted prasada cooked by the hand of SitaThakurani.

Previous to taking sannyasa also, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu along with Nityananda Prabhu would, from time to time go to the house of Advaita in Shantipura, where they would have a festival and perform Krishna-nama-lila kirtan all day and all night. The beautiful nature of this subject has been described by Shri Parameshvari Das Thakura in his Shri Pada Kalpataru as follows:

One day the Lord laughed, having arrived in the temple of Shri Advaita and thus the son of Sachi took his seat. Along with Nityananda, Advaita sat down, and the two of them began playfully assessing the idea of having a festival. Hearing all this, Sita Thakurani entered smiling. At that time, in sweet words which made the minds of those who heard them blissful, the son of Sachi ruled that there must be a great festival. He said, "Listen Sita Thakurani: we shall extend invitations to all the different Vaishnavas who live nearby. Let whoever hears the sound of our song, resounding through the air, come and join us. We shall invite one and all." Saying this, Shri Gaurachandra gave orders to the devotees saying, "You, invite the Vaishnavas." "You, ready the mridanga and karatalas." "You, prepare sandalwood and aguru for distribution." "Have everything ready at the ghat." "Carrying out these assignments expertly, and after garlanding the devotees with flower garlands, the devotees shall gather together in a circle for an uproarious kirtan."

Hearing the words of Mahaprabhu, the devotees followed his orders with great affection, collecting garlands, sandalwood, betel, ghee, honey, and milk, and everything else essential for worhsiping the Lord. The different gifts and fragrant articles for the devotees and the Lord were then distributed in the proper ways. The kirtan began at midday. At that time everyone chanted 'Hari! Hari!' and the mridanga made the whole kirtan auspicious. Thus swims Parameshavara dasa in the rasik pastimes of the Lord.

After Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa and went to live in Jagannatha Puri, Shri Advaita Acharya and Sita Thakurani used to go and visit him each year, bringing their son Achyutananda with them. On one such occasion, Sita Thakurani prepared some of the Lord's favorite preparations for him and invited Him to their home to take lunch. Simply to increase their ecstasy, the Lord, who was always absorbed in Krishna Nam, honored their invitation and took lunch in the home of Advaita and Sita. Sita Thakurani, being always overwhelmed with vatsalya-prema treated him as affectionately as if he were her own son. The Lord himself also treated her with the same kind of regard and affection that he had for

Sachidevi herself. Shri Sita Thakurani bore three sons, Achutananda, Krishna Mishra and Gopala Mishra, who were followers of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. According to Bhakti-Ratnakara, Shri Sita Thakurani's father was Shri Nrishimha Baduri. Sita Thakurani also had a sister, Shri. According to the Gaura-Ganoddesha Dipika, Sita Thakurani, the wife of Shri Advaita Acharya, is Yogamaya, and her sister Shri is the prakasha, or manifestation, of Yogamaya. (yogamaya bhagavati, grihinī tasya sampratam, sita rupenavatirna, "shri" namni tat prakashatah)

Shrivasa Thakura

That person who was the Vyasa of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes—Shrimad Vrindavan Das Thakura—speaks of Shrivas Pandit in his Shri Chaitanya Bhagavata:

"In Navadwip Dham, lived the holy Pandit Shri Shrivas,
And at his temple, Caitanya performed his sweet vilas.
Srivas and his brothers always sang the holy name,
And did their Krishna-puja and Ganges bath three times a day."

Shrivas, Shrirama, Shripati and Shrinidhi were four brothers. They used to live in Shri Hatta, but after some time they moved to Navadwip Dham and lived there. The four brothers used to go to the house of Advaita Acharya to listen to the Bhagavatam class, to perform Nam-sankirtan, and to participate in different Vaishnava activities. They were all great friends with Shri Jagannatha Mishra, the father of Shri Chaitanya. The four of them used to love to hear the bhagavatam and perform sankirtan together. As a result of their devotion, they could understand that Shri Krishna Himself would soon appear in the house of Jagannatha Mishra. Shrivas Pandit's wife was Malinidevi. She was the constant friend of Sachidevi and the two of them would derive great satisfaction in one another's company.

Seeing the terrible situation of the living entities in Kaliyuga, the devotees were greatly distressed, and, in order to deliver the fallen souls, began to pray for the appearance of God Himself. The Lord heard the prayers of his devotees. In 1407 Saka era, in the month of Phalguana, on the full moon night Shri Hari Himself advented in the home of Jagannatha Mishra in Mayapura. With his appearance in this world, everything became auspicious. The world was filled with the holy name. When Shri Advaita, who came from Shantipura, could understand that Shri Hari himself had appeared, he went to Shrivasa and all the other devotees and made them understand as well the importance of His divine appearance. Shrivas Pandit's wife Malini was devoted to Sachidevi and took care of her like a personal nurse. Shrivas Pandit was constantly at the house of Jagannatha Mishra; it was as if he was Jagannatha Mishra's shadow.

What the Supreme Lord may do from one moment to the next even he himself may not know; how then can anyone else understand his movements? At the time of Mahaprabhu's childhood, he exhibited many supernatural pastimes, but being bewildered by the Lord's Yogamaya potency, the devotees could not understand them. At the time of his advent all the hearts of the devotees were filled with

parental affection. Shrivas Pandita and Malini Devi, in nurturing and raising up the darling boy of Shachi Devi and Jagannatha Mishra gave him instruction on many subjects. And so, Shri Gaurasundara came to accept Shrivasa Pandit and Malini Devi as a second mother and father.

One day, during the time of Mahaprabhu's impudent schoolboy pranks and his pastimes of scholarship, Shrivasa Pandit came to the boy and instructed him as follows: "Why do people study? What do they really want to know and understand? What is the true object of knowledge? Krishna and Krishna-bhakti. For if one studies so many subjects, but has no understanding of Krishna, all his learning is useless. You are reading and studying and hearing so many lectures on different subjects. But you should perform Krishna-bhajan and apply your intelligence to that." Hearing this, mahaprabhu smiled and said, "By your mercy it shall certainly come to pass. By your mercy I shall certainly attain Krishna bhakti."

At length, Mahaprabhu, having gone to the holy city of Gaya where He accepted mantra initiation from Ishvara Puri, began to play the role for which he had come to this world. He began to manifest prema-bhakti within this world. One day, Mahaprabhu, manifesting his mood of the Supreme Controller, God Himself, came to the house of Shrivas Thakura and spoke as follows: "To whom have you performed worship? On whom have you meditated? Now see Him! Look upon the object of your worship! Shirvasa! Who have you worshipped? Look directly upon Him whom you have worshipped." Saying these words, Mahaprabhu entered the Deity room of Vishnu and boldly sat upon the altar, manifesting a four-armed form with conch, lotus, club, and chakra. Upon seeing Chaitanya Mahparabhu in this divine form, Shrivas Pandit was shocked and paralyzed with wonder.

At that time the Lord told Shrivas, "I have heard your loud Sankirtan and Advaita's roaring of the holy name of Krishna! And hearing their calls I have left Vaikuntha and appeared here in this material world with my eternal associates. I have come to punish the wicked and deliver the saintly. If you want to become fearless perform my sankirtan. Listening to these fearless words of Mahaprabhu Shrivasa Pandit fell to the earth offering his prostrated obeisances and recited the following prayers:

"Unto the lotus feet of Shri Chaitanya Vishvambhara
(whose dress is like a yellow cloud) I make my namaskara.
I bow before that Krishna (who is mother Sachi's son)
Bedecked with gunja-mala and peacock plume, bright as the sun,
Bright as a million moons whose cooling rays eclipse the stars;

To Ganga Das Pandit's Nimai, a hundred namaskaras.
With horn of buffalo, and cowherd stick, and bamboo flute,
Lord Krishna played, and you are He, the Godhead, Supreme Truth.
The Vedas sing the glories of Krishna—Nanda Kumara;
And thou art he, and so before your feet, my namaskara.

My birth and work have reached complete fulfillment here today.
My life has dawned anew, auspiciousness is mine today.
My ancestors have surely found salvation on this day.
My home and wealth have reached their true perfection on this day.
My fortune knows no earthly bounds upon this holy day—
The blissful vision of your holy feet blessed me today."

In this way, Shrivasa offered different prayers and hymns. Shri Chaitanya Maharpabhu was very kind to Shrivas, and within the house of Shrivasa he gave darshan of his divine form to all his eternal associates and devotees. When Shrivasa Pandit's niece Narayani came before him, Mahaprabhu, upon seeing her, said, "Narayani, chant Krishna, Krishna!" Chaitanya Bhagvata records, "Although she was only a four year old girl, her behavior was unusual. Chanting "Krishna, Krishna!" again and again, she fell on the ground stunned in ecstasy with tears in her eyes."

The little girl, Narayani, was stunned in ecstasy and chanted Krishna again and again with tears in her eyes. Seeing her tears of ecstasy, Shrivasa Pandit's wife as well as all the other devotees also cried tears of ecstasy. As a consequence, Shrivasa Angana was filled with a wonderful and beautiful impression of Krishna-prema.

In the house of Shrivasa there was a maidservant named Dukhi (unhappy). Every day she would bring water to bathe Mahaprabhu. One day the Lord asked Shrivasa, "Who is bringing this water?" Shrivasa said, "Dukhi is bringing the water." The Lord said, "From now own her name will be Sukhi (happy). Since she is engaged in service to Bhagavan and the Vaishnavas, she cannot be Dukhi (unhappy). She must be Sukhi (happy).

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu performed many different pastimes in the house of Shrivasa. Gradually, Nityananda Prabhu came to Nabadwip dham and met Shri Chaitanya. In the company of Shri Nityananda Prabhu, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu began performing different Sankirtana pastimes. Their Sankirtana

headquarters was Shrivas Angan. Shri Nityananda Prabhu Himself personally resided at Shrivasa Angan, and Shri Malini Devi, the wife of Shrivasa served Him as if he were her very own son. Nityananda Prabhu is Baladev Himself. He used to perform the pastimes of an avadhuta. He would dwell in the plane of Krishna prema, always overwhelmed by divine ecstasy. He was never burdened by any consideration of bodily ornamentation. Thus he was known as an avadhuta.

One day, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, along with his personal expansions and eternal associates, went to the house of Shrivasa to perform Sankirtan and dance. At that time the only son of Shrivasa became stricken with some unusual ailment and passed away. Within the ladies chambers all the women were crying and lamenting with great sobs and weeping and wailing. Shrivasa Pandit, understanding everything, entered into the ladies chambers. There he saw that his son had passed away, returning to the spiritual abode. With supreme gravity, this great knower of divine truth consoled the women. "You all know the glories of Krishna," he said, "Therefore, please don't cry. Check your tears. Even a great sinner who hears the holy name at the time of death attains the divine abode of Krishna. That very Krishna Himself—whose glories are sung by his servants like Brahma and Shiva—is dancing among you. It is certain, therefore, that this boy has returned to the Lord's supreme abode. Why then should there be any cause for lamentation. At this time you should rather honor this boy as one who was blessed with the supreme good fortune of attaining the ultimate goal of life."

In this way, Shrivasa Thakura, after giving many different instructions on divine truth to the ladies, finally said, "If you are unable to check your family sentiment and stop crying right now, I will give you good reason to cry later. At this moment, Shri Gaurasundara, the Lord of Gokula Himself, is performing sankirtan with his devotees in my house. If by your crying you disturb his happiness for one moment, then I shall immediately go jump in the Ganges and give up my life by drowning!"

"It is by Krishna's will alone that evevery blade of grass moves. Nothing comes to pass without his will. Whatever we may imagine to be good, bad, knowledge, or ignorance is all his will. Knowing whatever Krishna wants to be divine good, reject your own desires as so much useless garbage. Lord Krishna gives, and Krishna takes away. Krishna protects and nurtures all. Krishna gives life and takes it away according to his will. According to his will everything lives and dies. To contradict the will of God will be a useless attempt. It will only bring sorrow. Therfore, giving up all your lamentation, listen to the holy name of Krishna; by

doing so you will attain the highest ecstasy and completely fulfill your heart's desire.

After giving all these instructions, Shrivasa Thakura went outside and rejoined the great kirtan of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in which the Lord was absorbed in singing the holy name of Krishna and dancing. Leaving the thought of their dead child behind, the ladies listened to the kirtan of Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In this way the kirtan continued until late at night. The sankirtan gradually came to an end and everyone rested. At that time Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Today within my mind I felt that some great sorrow has struck this house." Shrivasa Pandit said, "O my Lord, how can there be any sorrow here? You have brought the highest delight to this house by the sweet kirtan that has emanated from your lotus mouth."

The Lord said, "Shrivasa, how is it that there was no ananda in the kirtan today? Has something inauspicious befallen your family?" Shrivasa said, "O my Lord! You are all-auspicious. As long as you are present here how can anything inauspicious take place? At last the devotees came to know that Shrivasa Thakur's only son had just died.

Upon hearing this, Lord Gauranga cried, "Alas, alas! The thought of this great tragedy pains me worse than death. Why did you not tell me of this most unfortunate event?" At this, Shrivasa Pandit said, "Hear me, O Lord; I could not break the flow of your rasa-kirtan. A body died, O Lord, what need is there for sorrow? If everyone in the universe had died, I would still experience the greatest happiness just by looking upon You. If I had broken the flow of your kirtan and stopped you from dancing, taht would have been a fate worse than death. And so I did not want to disturb your kirtan, for fear of the great disaster that would have taken place as a result of such ugly talk."

Seeing such deep determination in Shrivasa Thakura, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu began to weep. He said, "Not knowing of this lamentation for the son of Shrivasa, but bewildered by the ecstasy of Krishna-prema, how could I renounce such association?" Hearing these words, everyone thought deeply within themselves.

After this, Mahaprabhu went to the place where the dead child lay and touched him, saying, "O boy! Why did you renounce Shrivasa Pandit and go away?" At his touch, life returned to the boy and, after offering obeisances to Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the boy said, "O my Lord! You are the creator and destroyer of everything. You give life and take it away. You are the Supreme Lord of

all. Nothing can be done without your decree. As long as it is decreed by you, one can stay here; when you decree, they can no longer remain. When your sanction for our short stay on earth is removed we must move on. O Lord. Many times I have taken birth, and many times I have died. But this time is different. This time I died while having darshan of your beautiful lotus feet, and so I have left this earth in complete happiness."

Saying this, the boy fell silent, having satisfied the inquiry of Shri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. Hearing this unprecedented discourse from the mouth of the dead child, everyone was astonished and all the devotees floated in the waves of the ocean of bliss. In this way, beholding the wondrous pastimes of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Shrivasa Pandit fell before the lotus feet of the Lord and wept tears of ecstasy. Whereupon Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Nityananda and I are your two sons. Always think of this and you will never experience the sorrow of having lost a son. Nityananda and I are your sons. Therefore why should you lament?" Hearing these words of mercy, the devotees filled the four directions with cries of joy. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Shri Nityananda Prabhu were indebted to Shrivasa on account of his devotion and service. This is proof that The Lord becomes indebted to his devotees.

When Chaitanya Mahaprabhu tok sannyasa Shrivasa Pandit returned to Kumara Hatta and lived there. Now and then he and his brothers would go to Jagannatha Puri to have darshan of Mahaprabhu. Sometimes he would go to Nabadwipa-Mayapura to see Sachidevi, and at that time he would stay in his house there for a few days.

When Chaitanya Mahaprabhu returned to Bengal from Jagannatha Puri after five years of his sannyasa, he would take darshan of Sachimata and the Ganges he went by Kumarhatta and visited the house of Shrivasa Thakura there. Chaitanya Bhagavata says, "After staying for a few days at the house of Advaita, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu visited the home and temple of Shrivasa. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave Shrivasa a boon, saying, "There shall never be any poverty or shortage in your home." Shrivasa Pandit with his three brothers always served Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with great happiness. Shrivasa Pandit is the avatara of Narada Muni. He is a constant associate of the Lord who is plays a role in all of the Lord's important pastimes.

Shri Svarupa Damodara is an eternal associate and friend of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Previously his name was Shri Purushottama Acharya. He lived in Nabadwipa. He always stayed with Mahaprabhu. When Shriman Mahaprabhu took sannyasa, he became half-mad. He went to Varanasi and took sannyasa from a sannyasi named Chaitanyananda, who ordered him to study Vedanta and teach it to the people in general.

Shri Purushottama Acharya did not accept the dress of a sannyasi, but only gave up the shikha and sacred thread. His name became Svarupa. After this, taking up the order of his sannyasa-guru, Shri Purushottama Acharya went to Jagannatha Puri. At that time, he again met with Shri Chaitanya. The Chaitanya Charitamrita (ML 10:102-104) records this meeting as follows: "One day, Svarupa Damodara arrived. His mystic awareness of the Lord's inner purpose was deep and unfathomable. He was an ocean of rasa. In his previous ashrama, his name had been Purushottama Acharya. When he was in Nabadwipa, he had attained the Lord's lotus feet. But when he saw the sannyāsa of Shri Chaitanya, he went half-mad. And so, he went straight to Varanasi to take sannyāsa.

In connection with Svarupa Damodara, Shrimad Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami has written further, as follows: "Shri Svarupa Damodara was the limit of scholarship; still, he did not generally converse with anyone. He kept to himself. He liked to remain alone, and did not see others. He was the very embodiment of Krishna-prem. He was like a second Mahaprabhu, in the sense that he fully understood the Lord's conclusions on Krishna-tattva and Krishna-bhakti, and could fully represent them. As such, whoever wanted to bring before the Lord a book, poem, or song would first bring it to Svarupa Damodara, who would examine it before the Lord would hear it. The Lord did not delight in hearing literature and song which was opposed to the conclusions of bhakti (bhaktisiddhanta-viruddha), or which contained rasabhasa, conflicting devotional mellows. Therefore, Svarupa Damodara would examine these things, and if he decided that they were pure, then he would arrange for the Lord to hear them.

Svarupa Damodara would sing for Shri Chaitanya the songs of Vidyapati, Chandidasa, and Gita-Govinda, and this gave the Lord much pleasure. Svarupa Damodara could sing like a Gandharva, and he knew the scriptures like Brihaspati, the guru of the gods. No one was a greater soul than he. He was most dear to

Advaita and Nityananda and the life and soul of the devotees headed by Shrivasa Thakura."

In this way, it is said that Svarupa Damodara was like a second form of Mahaprabhu, in song he was like a Gandharva, and in scripture, he was like Brihaspati. Svarupa Damodara was very expert in music as well as Vedic scriptures. Shri Chaintaya used to call him Damodara, becasue of his expert singing and musical skills. The name Damodara was given by Shri Chaitanya and added tothe name given by his sannyasa guru. He was therefore known as Svarupa Damodara. He compiled a book of music called Sangita-Damodara.

When anyone wanted to submit a song, a verse, or a book to Shriman Mahaprabhu, they first had to submit it to the examination of Svarupa Damodara, before it would be heard by the Lord. When Svarupa Damodara came from Kashi, he submitted a verse before the Lord, glorifying Him. This verse has been recorded by Kavi Karnapura in his Chaitanya Chandrodaya Nataka as follows:

heloddhunita khedaya vishadaya pronmila-damodarau

shamyacchastra vivadaya rasadaya cittarpitonmadaya

shashvad-bhaktivinodaya sa-madaya madhurya-maryadaya

shri chaitanya dayanidhe tava daya bhuyadamandodya

"O Ocean of Mercy, Shri Chaitanya! Let that which easily drives away whatever pain we have been experiencing in this material world; that which is all-purifying that which manifests the greatest transcendental bliss; that which by its sunrise casts away all the doubtful conclusions of the shastra; that which rains rasa on our hearts and minds rules our consciousness and thus causes jubliation; that all-liberating, all-auspiciousness-giving, the limit of madhurya-rasa mercy of yours—let it arise without our hearts. "

Shri Svarupa Damodara made his dandavats before the Lord, and the Lord embraced him, saying, "Today I saw in a dream that you were arriving here. Everything was just right. Just as one who is blind becomes happy getting eyes, so I have become happy upon getting you."

Shri Svarupa Goswami said, "O Lord! Please forgive me. Forgetting you, I deserted your lotus feet. Not having a trace of prema within me, I left your service, and being sinful, I went to a foreign land. But, although I abandoned you, you didn't abandon me. By the ropes of your mercy, you have bound me by the neck and dragged me back to your lotus feet."

Hearing Svarupa Damodara saying these words in great humility, the Lord again embraced him and said, "Shri Krishna is very kind. By his mercy we have met once again."

Svarupa Damodara always stayed near the Lord. Whatever mood the Lord was in, Svarupa Damodara would perform kirtan to augment the Lord's internal sentiments. Around the same time that Svarupa Damodara came to Puri, Shri Ramananda Raya arrived from Vidyanagara. Shri Ramananda Raya was a great poet and could explain everything in a very elegant style. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu heard *rasatattva* from Ramananda's mouth.

In the daytime, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu used to perform kirtan with his devotees. At night, in the company of Ramananda Raya and Svarupa Damodara, he would relish the truths about the pastimes and mellows of Radha and Krishna. In the same way that Lalita and Vishakha are the internal confidantes of Shri Radha, Svarupa Damodara and Ramananda Raya are the internal confidantes of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

At the time of Shri Gaurasundara's final pastimes, Shri Svarupa Damodara was constantly with the Lord. Shri Svarupa Damodara's right hand was Raghunatha Dasa Goswami.

On the second day of the day of full moon in the month of Asharh, Shri Svarupa Damodara Goswami passed away from this earth and entered into the Lord's unmanifest pastimes.

Srimad Vrndavan dasa Thakura

Srimad Vrndavan dasa Thakura's mother's name was Sri Narayani Devi. Narayani Devi was the daughter of Srivas Thakura's brother. After the disappeareance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srivas Thakura went to live in Kumar Hatta. Srivasa Thakura had three brothers: Sripati, Srirama and Srinidhi. He also had one son, but at a young age, his son passed away. returning to the Lord's supreme abode.

Srivasa Thakura had previously lived in Sri Hatta, but because he wanted the association of devotees he went to live on the banks of the Ganges in Nabadwip. When Mahaprabhu revealed his divinity in the house of Srivasa, showing his true self to the assembled devotees there, Narayani devi was only a four year old girl. In the Caitanya Bhagavata it is written:

"The golden moon, Sri Gauranga, revealed himself as the soul of all souls.
At that time he ordered Narayani to chant the name of Krishna.
Although she was only four years old she became mad with love of God.
And crying, "O Krishna!" she swooned in ecstasy.
As she laid on the ground in a trance of bliss, her eyes filled with tears,
overwhelmed with divine love."

Narayani Devi's son was Vrindavana Das Thakura. In the Caitanya Bhagavata he has written of how Narayani was the object of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's affection:

"As a result of her great piety, Narayani would get whatever remnants the Lord might leave after eating. Although she was only an unschooled little girl, the Lord would favor Srivas Thakur's niece by giving her the leftovers of food touched by His holy lips."

Indeed it was by the mercy of the Lord's prasada that Vrindavan dasa Thakura took birth in the womb of Narayani as the incarnation of Vyasa. Sri Gauranga and Sri Nityananda were the very life and soul of Vrindavana dasa Thakura. About the father of Vrindavana dasa Thakrua little is mentioned any;where. Apart from his

relationship with Narayani, Vrinavana, not much is known of Vrindavan das Thakura's ancestry.

In his commentary on the Caitanya Bhagavata, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura: "At the ancestral home of Malini-devi [the wife of Srivasa Thakura] Vrindavana dasa played as a small boy growing up. There he was nourished and cared after just like a valuable gem."

One may find many facts regarding the life of Vrindavana Dasa by going to Mamagachi, the village where Sri Narayani's wedding took place. Soon thereafter, in Magagachi, while Vrindavana dasa was still within the womb Narayani became a widow. In the small room of a poor brahmana, she lived in great poverty and hardship as a maidservant in the house of Vasudeva Dutt. Vrindavana Dasa Thakura was born, and soon began his studies. Vrindavana Dasa Thakura took birth four years after Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted sannyasa. When Mahaprabhu had disappeared from this world and entered into his aprakrita-lila, Vrindavana Das was barely twenty years old.

Soon thereafter, Vrindavan Das Thakura accepted initiation from Sri Nityananda Prabhu. He is Nityananda's eternal servant. Sri Vrindavana Dasa Thakura went with Sri Jahnava-devi to the great festival in Kheturi gram. The poet Sri Krishna das Kaviraja Goswami writes of the endless glories of Vrindavan das Thakura:

"Krishna's life was written in the Bhagavata of Vyasa.
The Vedavyasa for Sri Caitanya was Vrindavana Dasa.
Vrindavan das has called his book the "Caitanya Mangala"
Whoever hears his book no grave misfortunes shall befall.
Who reads it knows the glories of Caitanya and Nitai
And knows what Krishna-bhakti is, and how it is, and why.
His book contains the essence of the holy Bhagavata
And shows what Krishna-Bhakti is and what Bhakti is not.
An atheist who hears the Thakura's words will soon relent
And join the ranks of saintly men whose souls are heavensent.
No ordinary man can sing of God as he has sung:
The Lord Himself has spoken through the Thakur's holy tongue.
I bow a million times before the holy lotus feet

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Of Sri Vrindavan das, whose verses are so sweet
That one who reads them shall be freed from this dark, mortal earth;
I bow a million times before the place where he took birth."

VAKRESHVARA PANDIT

At the time of Shriman Mahaprabhu's Nabadwipa-lila, as well as at the time of his taking sannyasa and his staying in Jagannatha Puri, Vakreshvara Pandit was an associate of the Lord. Shri Vakreshvara Pandit's birthplace is near the Triveni in a place called Guptiparaya. Shri Vakreshvara Pandit was expert in song and dancing. He once danced continuously for 72 hours. In the Gaura-Ganodesh-Dipika, verse 71, it is stated that Vakreshvara Pandit was an incarnation of Aniruddha, one of the quadruple expansions of Vishnu. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu played in dramatic performances in the house of Shrivasa Pandit, Vakreshvara Pandit was one of the chief dancers. When Caitanya Mahaprabhu first began his Sankirtan-lila Vakreshvara Pandit was a great singer and dancer. When Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu went to Ramkeli, Vakreshvara Pandit went with him.

By the mercy of Vakreshvara Pandit Devananda Pandit was delivered. Devananda Pandit had a reputation as a great scholar of the Bhagavatam from the monist point of view. One day Srivasa Pandit went to hear his Bhagavata class, and in the ecstasy of Krishna prem began to cry tears of joy upon hearing the holy Bhagavata. At that time, some of Devananda Pandit's ignorant disciples, feeling that Shrivasa Thakura was disrupting the class, threw Shrivas Pandit out of the house where the Bhagavatam class was going on. Ignorant of the true position both of the Lord's devotee and the holy Bhagavata , Devananda Pandit made no protest after seeing this disrespectful treatment of a great Vaishnava with his own eyes. In this way, he was responsible for Vaishnava-aparadha, an offense at the lotus feet of a pure devotee.

When Caitanya Mahaprabhu manifest his divinity in Nabadwip in the house of Shrivasa Thakura, it came to his attention that such an offense had been commited a the lotus feet of that great devotee, Shrivasa Thakura. At that time, he gave many instructions regarding the position of the book Bhagavata and the person Bhagavata. He said, "If one studies the book Bhagavata but doesn't respect the devotee Bhagavata, he is an offender. One may study the Bhagavata in that way for hundreds and hundreds of kalpas without making any progress towards Krishna-prema. The book Bhagavata and the person Bhagavata are nondifferent. One who is sincere to know the meaning of the book Bhagavata must serve the devotee Bhagavata. Mahaprabhu was indifferent towards Devananda Pandit and did not bestow Krishna-prema upon him.

One day Vakreshvara Pandit was in the section of Nabadwip known as Kuliya at the house of a devotee. That evening Vakreshvara Pandit was singing the glories of the Lord and dancing in ecstasy. Devananda Pandit went there to find out what was going on, and when he saw Vakreshvara Pandit enveloped in a mood of ecstasy, he became fascinated by watching him. By and by a large crowd formed, pressing forward to see Vakreshvara Pandit. Shri Devananda Pandit then pushed the crowd back waving a cane in his hand, so that the divine kirtan and dancing of Shri Vakreshvara Pandit Thakura was not disturbed. In this way for another six hours into the night Vakreshvara Pandit continued his intense singing and dancing in divine kirtana. Later, when Vakreshvara Pandit had taken a seat in order to rest, Devananda Pandit fell before his feet, offering his obeisances in full submission. Vakreshavara Pandit was very happy with Devananda Pandit and his service, and blessed him, saying, "May you have love of God." From that day on, Devananda Pandit's Krishna Bhakti grew. One who gets the blessing of a devotee soon achieves Krishna-bhakti.

After Caitanya Mahaprabhu had stayed in Jagannatha Puri for some time, he returned to Kuliya in Nabadwipa, in order to visit his mother and see the Ganges. At that time, he gave his mercy to Devananda Pandit. At that time he told Devananda Pandit: "Because you have rendered service to Vakreshvara Pandit I consider you to be one of my own. Vakreshvara Pandit is completely empowered by the Lord. He has attained Krishna, and is full in Krishna-bhakti. Krishna has made his home in the heart of Vakreshvara Pandit, and as Krishna dances within his heart, so Vakreshavara Pandit himself dances. Whatever place Vakreshvara Pandit blesses with his association becomes a holy place of pilgrimage more sacred than all the holy places."

In this way Vrindavan Das Thakur writes of the glories of Shri Vakreshvara Pandit. Although Shri Vakreshvara Pandit had previously lived in Nabadwip, he left Nabadwip for Jagannatha Puri after Mahaprabhu took sannyasa, in order to better serve the Lord. After this, he lived in Jagannatha Puri. The Caitanya Caritamrita says, "Among the devotees who accompanied the Lord in Jagannatha Puri, two of them—Paramananda Puri and Svarupa Damodara—were the heart and soul of the Lord. Among the other devotees were Gadadhara, Jagadananda, Sankara, Vakreshvara, Damodara Pandit, Thakura Haridasa, Raghunatha Vaidya, and Ragunatha das. All these great devotees had been his associates from the very begining of the Lord's pastimes, and when the Lord took up residence in Jagannatha Puri they remained there to serve him faithfully.

It is said that Vakreshvara Pandit later lived in the house of Kashi Mishra. There he established the Radha-Kanta deities. Shri Vakreshvara Pandit's disciple was Gopal Guru Goswami. Shri Gopal Guru Goswami's disciple Dhayanachandra Goswami has written a book called the Dhyan Chandra Paddhati. There he has written of Vakreshvara Pandit: "Previously in Vrindavan he was Tungavidya Gopi who was expert in singing and dancing. Later that same person appeared in the lila of Caitanya Mahaprabhu and became known as Vakreshvara Pandit. He appeared within this world as Vakreshavara Pandit on the day of Krishnapanchami in the month of Asharh. He disappeared from this Earth and entered into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord on the sixth day of the full moon in the month of Asarh. " One of Vakreshvara Pandit's family members was the poet Shri Govinda dev of Utkala who is known as an Oriyan. In the year 17, Gaur Era, he compiled a scripture in the Orissan language named "Shri Gaura Krishnodaya." This book has since been published by the great acarya of the Gaudiya Sampradaya, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada, who recently entered into the eternal pastimes of the Lord. In Gaura Krishnodaya Govinda Das describes the life of Vakreshvara Pandit. There are many disciples of Vakreshvara Pandit and they are known as Gaudiya Vaishnavas although they are from Orissa.
Vrindavan Das Thakura has described the great celebration of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's sankirtan rasa in his Caitanya Bhagavata. There he mentions Vakreshvara Pandit's participation in Mahaprabhu's sankirtan-lila as follows: "To bless all souls with good fortune, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared on this earth in an enchanting form, which was like a doll of gold. To awaken the sleeping souls of the age of Kali, he came to distribute the nectar of the holy name of Krishna. The Lord descended to this earth in the midst of his eternal associates: Nityananda, Advaita Acarya, Gadadhara, and all His pure devotees. When Caitanya came, the khol and kartals sounded like the thunder of the clouds within the temple of the Lord. Absorbed in different moods of ecstatic love, Sri Caitanya would order everyone to chant the holy name of Krishna, saying, "bolo Haribol!" Raising his arms to the sky, the Son of Sachi would dance in ecstasy. At that time the beautiful Ramai and Shri Raghunandan also danced. Srivasa Thakura and Haridas Thakura as well as Vakreshvara Pandit, Dvija Haridas, and Shankara Pandit also danced. In this way, again and again glorifying their activities within this world, floating on the ocean of ecstasy churned by them, Vrindavana Das sings this Caitanya Bhagavata.

At the time of Rathayatra in Jagannatha Puri, there were four sampradayas. In their midst Vakreshavara Pandit initiated a new sampradaya—of dancing. Shri Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes of the glories of Vakreshvara Pandit: "Vakreshvara Pandit was the fifth branch of the Caitanya tree. He was a very dear servant of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Once in the house of Srivasa Thakura he danced with constant ecstasy for seventy-two hours. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu personally sang while Vakreshvara Pandit danced, and thus Vakreshvara Pandit fell at the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya and said, "O you whose face is as beautiful as the full moon; please give me 10,000 Gandharvas. Let them sing as I dance, and then I will be greatly happy." The Lord replied, "I have only one wing like you, but if I had another, certainly I could fly like a bird."

Lives of the Saints
Vamshivadananda Thakura

On the Caitra Purnimā, the full moon day of the month of Caitra, Śrī Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura took birth within this world. It was a sweet moon in 1466, and everyone sang in great joy at the appearance of such a great soul.

Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura is also known as Vaṁśīvadana, Vaṁśī dāsa, Vaṁśī. Within Kuliyā are the villages known as Teghari, Veñciāḍā, Vedaḍāpāḍā, and Cineḍāṅga Grāma. Śrīkara Caṭṭyopadhyaya's sons moved to Bilvagrāma, Pāḍulī Hata, and Veñciāḍā in Kuliya. His eldest son was Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira Caṭṭyopadhyāya. His three sons were Mādhava dāsa, Haridāsa, and Kṛṣṇadāsa. When Caitanya Mahāprabhu left Jagannātha Purī and came to Bengal to visit the Ganges and his mother after five years of his *sannyāsa*, he stayed for seven days at the house of Mādhava dāsa. It was there that the Lord instructed and delivered Devānanda Paṇḍita as well as many others, when he granted general amnesty to all those who had committed offenses during the Lord's early life in Nabadwīpa dhāma.

It was in the house of Śrī Mādhava dāsa that Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura took birth. His mother's name was Śrīmatī Candrakalādevī. Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura is the *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa's flute. The day that he took birth, Caitanya Mahāprabhu was staying in the house of Śrī Mādhava dāsa. Advaita Ācārya Prabhu was also present. Mādhava dāsa was a greatly devoted soul and was very attached to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The Lord was very affectionate towards his son, Vaṁśī. The *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* makes no mention of Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura. However in the *Caitanya Candrodāya* of Kavi Karṇapura it is written (9.33): "When the Lord went to Nabadwīpa dhāma after crossing the Ganges, he stayed for seven days in Kuliya-grāma at the house of Mādhava dāsa." Mahāprabhu had been in Śāntipura at the house of Advaita Ācārya. He crossed the Ganges and came to Kuliya-grāma, where he stayed for seven days in order to give mercy to the people of Nabadwīpa. Śrī Narahari Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in his *Bhakti-ratnākara* (4.23) that when Śrinivāsa Ācārya went to visit the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Māyāpūra during his pilgrimage to Nabadwīpa, he met Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura. At that time Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura bestowed his blessings upon the young Śrīnivāsa Ācārya who also managed to take *darśana* of the holy feet of Śrī Viṣṇupriyā devī. Narahari writes, "Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura sat the young Śrīnivāsa Ācārya upon his lap and wet his head with tears of ecstasy in love of Godhead."

After the disappearance of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura was engaged as a servant by Viṣṇupriyā devī. It is said that he became the foremost recipient of

her mercy. After the disappearance of Viṣṇupriyā devī he took the Mahāprabhu deity established by her to Koladwīpa which is presently the town known as Nabadwīpa dhāma. There he established the worship of the Mahāprabhu deity. There, he also established a deity of Kṛṣṇa known as Prāṇavallabha. In the summer he used to stay in Bilvagrāma. There in Bilvagrāma he was famous among the learned scholars, Bhaṭṭācāryas, and pious gentlemen. He had two sons named Caitanya dāsa and Nitāi dāsa. Caitanya dāsa also had two sons: Śrī Rāmacandra and Śrī Śacīnandana. In the *Gauḍiya* published by the Gaudiya Math (Vol. 22 # 30-37) it is written, "Śrī Jāhnavā Mātā accepted alms from this Rāmacandra and initiated him in the place called Khaḍadaha after instructing him in the science of Vaiṣṇavism." Śrī Rāmacandra Goswāmī was a *bramacārī*. He engaged his younger brother Śrī Śacīnandana in the service of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa in the place called Bāghana Pāḍā. Śrī Śacinandana Goswāmī's sons and descendants are the present day Goswāmī caste in Bāghana Pāḍā.

Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura was a lyrical poet and a composer of songs. All his songs are especially sweet and mellow and express deep moods of devotion. In one famous song he has expressed the separation felt by Mother Śacī upon the *sannyāsa* of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Vaṁśīvadānanda Ṭhākura has also composed songs about Kṛṣṇa's *dāna-līla*, *nauka-vilāsa*, and *vana-vihāra-līla*.

Lives of the Saints
Vasudeva Ghosh, Govinda Ghosh, and Madhava Ghosh

Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī writes (CC *Adi* 10.115): "The three brothers, Govinda, Mādhava, and Vāsudeva were the eighty-second, eighty-third, and eighty-fourth branches of the Caitanya tree. Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda used to dance in their *kīrtana* performances. In his *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* commentary, Śrīpad Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja writes: "The three brothers, Govinda, Mādhava and Vāsudeva Ghosh all belonged to a *kayastha* family. govinda established the Goīnātha temple in Agradvīpa, where he resided. Mādhava Ghosh was expert in performing *kīrtana*. No one within this world could compete with him. He was known as the singer of Vṛndāvana and was very dear to Nityānanda Prabhu. It is said that when the three borthers performed *saṅkīrtana* immediately Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu would dance in ecstasy. According to the *gaura-gaṇoddeśsa-dīpikā (188)*, the three brothers were formely Kalāvatī, Rasollāsā and Guṇatuṅgā, who recited the songs composed by Śrī Viśākhā-gopī. The three brothers were among one of the seven parties that performed *kīrtana* when Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu attended the Rathayātrā festival at Jagannātha Purī. Vakreśvara Paṇḍita was the chief dancer in their party. This is vividly described in the *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter Thirteen, verses 42 and 43 [of *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*]."

Kavirāja Goswāmī further records (CC *Ādi* 10.117—118): "By the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, three devotees accompanied Lord Nityānanda Prabhu when He returned to Bengal to preach. These three were Rāmadāsa, Mādhava, and Vāsudeva Ghosh. Govinda Ghosh, however, remained with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and thus felt great satisfaction."

The *saṅkīrtana* party comprising these three brothers and their performance of *kīrtana* at the Ratha-yatra festival in Jagannātha Purī is is described as follows (CC *Ādi* 13.24—63): "Everyone was astonished to see the decorations on the Ratha car. The car appeared to be newly made of gold, and it was as high as Mount Sumeru. the decorations included bright mirrors, and hundreds and hundreds of cāmaras [white whisks made of yak tails]. On top of the car were a neat and clean canopy and very beautiful flag. The car was also decorated with silken cloth and various pictures. Many brass bells, gongs, and ankle bells rang. For the pastimes of the Ratha-yatra ceremony, Lord Jagannātha got aboard one car, and His sister, Subhadrā, and elder brother Balarāma, got aboard two other cars. For fifteen days Lord Jagannātha had remained in a secluded place with the supreme goddess of fortune and had performed his pastimes with her. Having taken permission from the

goddess of fortune, the Lord came out to ride on the Ratha car and perform His pastiems for the pleasure of the devotees....As the car stood still, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gathered all his devotees and with His own hand, decorated them with flower garlands and sandalwood pulp. Paramānanda Pruī and Brahmānanda Bhāratī were both personally given garlands and sandalwood pulp from the very hands od Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This increased their transcendental pleasure. Similarly, when Advaita Ācārya and Nityānanda Prabhu felt the touch of the transcendental hand of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, they were both very pleased. The Lord also gave garlands and sandalwood pulp to the performers of *saṅkīrtana*. The chief performers were Svarūpa Dāmodra and Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura. There were altogether four parties of *kīrtana* performers, comprising twenty-four chanters. In each party there were also two *mṛdaṅga* players, making an additional eight person. When the four parties were formed, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, after some consideration, divided the chanters. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu ordered Nityānanda Prabhu, Advaita Ācārya, Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Vakreśvara Paṇḍita to dance in each of the four respective parties. [Aside from the other three...] The Lord formed another group, appointing Govinda Ghosh as the lead singer. In this group Choṭa Haridāsa, Viṣṇudāsa, and Rāghava Paṇḍita sang in response to Govinda Ghosh. The two brothers of Govinda Ghosh, Mādhava Ghosh and Vāsudeva Ghosh also joined the group as responsive singers. In that *kīrtana* group, Vakreśvara Paṇḍita was the dancer...Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed his pastimes for some time in this way. He personally sang and induced his personal associates to dance."

According to the *Gaura-Parṣada-caritāvalī* the three brothers, Vāsudeva Ghosh, Mādhava Ghosh and Govinda Ghosh were especially sweet-throated singers. When these three would sing, Nityānanda Prabhu Himself would dance in great ecstasy.

It is said that their home village was within Śrī Haṭṭa in a place called either Baḍuna or Buraṅgī grāma. In any case it is known that Vāsudeva Ghosh Ṭhākura's father resided in Kumāra haṭṭa. After the passing away of their father, Vāsudeva, Govinda, and Mādhava Ghosh went to live in Nabadwīpa dhāma. They came from the *kayastha* caste that has its origin in the Northern part of the Rāḍa-deśa, where the Ganges does not flow. All three of them are eternal associates of Śrī Caitanya and Nityānanda. According to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda these three are situated in the *madhurya-rasa* and are in the section of those who have accepted Śrī Rādhikā as their ultimate *āśraya-vigraha*.

Vāsughosh Ṭhākura has written many songs about Śrī Gaurāṅga. One of his most famous songs contains the line *yadi gaura na ha'te tabe ke haita kemane dharitam de*. Śrīpāda Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhar deva Goswāmī has commented on this song as follows: "Vasudev

Ghosh says, *yadi gaura na ha'te tabe ke haita kemane dharitam de*: 'If Gaurāṅga had not appeared in this Kali-yuga, then how could we tolerate living? How could we sustain our lives? What he has given—the very gist, the very charm of life—without that, we think it is impossible for anyone to live in this world. Such a thing has been invented, discovered by Gaurāṅga. If He had not come, then how could we live. It is impossible to live devoid of such a holy and gracious thing as divine love. Without Caitanya Mahāprabhu, how could we know that Rādhārāṇī stands supreme in the world of divine love? We have received all these things from Him, and now we think that life is worth living. Otherwise, to live would be suicidal."

Vasudeva Ghosh has written many other songs about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In another song, he describes the childhood play of the Lord in a song beginning with the line "*śacīra āṅgināya nāce viśvambhara rāya*:

In Śacīdevī's courtyard dances Viśvambhara Roy—
The master of the universe—a little golden boy.
Round and round he runs and plays, at last he runs and hides.
"You can't find me," he laughs, "O Ma! You can't find me," he chides.
"O Viśvambhara," his mother cries, "I can't see you, my boy."
He runs to her, he holds her sari's hem, and leaps with joy.
His merry dance of glee would put the wag-tail bird to shame;
Thus sings the poet Vasudev of Śrī Caitanya's fame:
The beauty of his childish form is radiant and fair
enrapturing the minds and hearts of all souls everywhere."

Vasudeva Ghosh has written another song where he asserts that Śrī Caitanya is one and the same with Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and Lord Jagannātha: "*jaya jaya jagannātha śacīra nandana...*"

"All glories to the Lord of the Universe, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is one and the same with Lord Jagannātha. All glories to Lord Jagannātha. The three worlds fall before his feet. On the altar in the temple at Jagannātha Purī Lord Kṛṣṇa holds the conch, *cakra*, mace, and lotus; but when he comes from Nabadwīpa-dhāma that same Lord carries the *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu*, the staff and waterpot of a *sannyāsī*, a renounced mendicant. It is said that the same Rāma who previously chastised the demon king Rāvana is a *vaibhava* expansion of His, who descended in order to manifest different pastimes. The Gaura-avatara descends from Goloka with the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. In this *avatara* the Lord preaches the glories of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa in the form of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Vasudeva Ghosh, with folded hands, chants the glories of that Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself, Lord Jagannātha, the master of the

universe. Vasudeva Ghosh thus glorifies all three of those Lords. What do I need to speak of all of your hundreds and hundreds of *avataras*, when O Lord Gaurāṅga, you alone are the topmost. All the Viṣṇu *avataras* as well as Lord Śiva, Śukadeva Goswāmī, Nārada Muni, the four Kumāras, and all the masters of the universe are begging for the divine love which you alone can distribute. You were famous in your former *lila* as Lord Rāma for constructing a floating bridge of stones across the Indian Ocean to Śrī Lanka. Now in this Kali-yuga, you have given us the bridge of *kīrtana*, by which even the lame and blind can cross over the ocean of material existence and attain supreme spiritual happiness. Without any qualification for receiving this mercy all men and women can dance in ecstasy and attain perfection by the mercy of Śrī Gaurāṅga. As a result of his divine qualities, the ten directions become mad with ecstasy. Therefore, Vasudeva Ghosh says, 'Give up all your interest in *japa*, austerity, and Vedic understanding and just accept my Śrī Gaurāṅga as your life and soul.'"

According to the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dipikā*, Govinda Ghosh, Mādhava Ghosh, and Vasudeva Ghosh Ṭhākura were formerly the *gopīs* in Vṛndāvana named Kalāvatī, Rasolāsā and Guṇatuṅgā Sakhī. When Mahāprabhu was staying in Jagannātha Purī, these three brothers would come every year for the Ratha-yatra and perform their famous *kīrtana*. After the passing of Mahāprabhu from this world into the spiritual world, these three brothers went their separate ways. Govinda Ghosh Ṭhākura went to live in Agradwīpa, Śrī Mādhava Ghosh Ṭhākura went to live in Dāñīhāṭṭā, and Śrī Vasudeva Ghosh went to live in the village of Tamala.

It is said that Govinda Ghosh Ṭhākura had no children. As he grew old, he was in some anxiety, worrying about who would perform his funeral ceremony and offer a sacrifice in his honor after his passing away. One night in a dream Gopīnātha, his Kṛṣṇa Deity, came to him and said, "Do not worry, I shall perform the sacrificial offerings myself. Have no fear." Even to this day, every year on the anniversary of the passing away of Śrī Govinda Ghosh Ṭhākura, the Gopīnātha Deity performs the sacrificial ceremonies in his honor. Śrī Vasudeva Ghosh Ṭhākura passed away on the second day of the full moon in the month of Kartika.

Lives of the Saints
Vishnupriya devi

The Supreme Lord Viṣṇu has three different *Śaktis*: Śrī, Bhū, and Nīla. Śrī Viṣṇupriya is the internal potency known as Bhū-śakti. She appeared in Gaura-līla to assist Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with his mission of spreading the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

In Nabadwīpa-dhāma there lived a *brahmaṇa* named Sanātana Miśra, who was an extremely exalted Viṣṇu-bhakta. He was a pious and generous *brahmaṇa* as well, and used to feed, clothe and shelter many people. He was famous as the king of *paṇḍitas*. In fact, in Dvāpara-yuga, he had been a king named Satrajit. As a result of his pure devotion to Viṣṇu he was blessed with a beautiful daughter who was rich in all good qualities. From her early childhood, Viṣṇupriya devī used to bathe in the Ganges three times daily. She was devoted to her parents and carefully followed the scriptural principles, and performed *pūjā*, *arcana*, and served the *tulasī* tree, while observing many different vows of austerity and piety.

Every day, when Viṣṇupriya went to visit the Ganges, she would bow at the feet of Mother Śacī with great humility. When Śacīdevī noticed the modest and beautiful Viṣṇupriya-devī she gave Viṣṇupriya-devī her blessing that she might find a good husband, saying, "May Kṛṣṇa bestow upon you a good husband." Fom that moment, she began thinking of how Viṣṇupriyā would make a good bride for her son Nimāi. Upon further inquiry she found that the girl's name was Viṣṇupriyā, that she was the daughter of Sanātana Miśra, a wealthy and respect paṇḍita of Nabadwīpa.

At this time, the Lord's first wife, Lakṣmīpriyā had passed away and entered into the spiritual domain. Śacī's heart had been tormented with great pain at first, but as the days passed, she had become anxious for her son's happiness. In this way she began to think of quickly arranging for a new bride for her son. When she found that Śrī Gaurasundra had no objections to the idea, Śacidevī began to make arrangements in earnest. She sent a servant to the house of Kaśīnātha Paṇḍita, the matchmaker to arrange an appointment. When she met with Kaśinātha Paṇḍita, she proposed that a match be made between Nimāi Paṇḍita and Viṣṇupriyā-devī, saying, "Speak to the Rāja-paṇḍita; If he so desries he may bestow his daughter's hand in marriage upon my son Nimāi." When the matchmaker heard of these plans, he was overjoyed and was eager to conclude the arrangements quickly. He set out immediately for the house of Sanātana Miśra, chanting the holy name of Hari in jubilation.

According to caste, Sanātana Miśra was situated in a higher social position, and so might not agree to the wedding. Śacī was concerned that Sanātana Miśra, who was higher in social position would refuse to marry his daughter to Nimāi Paṇḍita, the son of poor parents, and who had a reputation as an eccentric.

When Śācīmata submitted the proposal to the matchmaker, he was highly pleased. When she told him she was worried whether or not Sanātana Miśra would accept the idea, she said, "Thākurāṇī! If Sanātana Miśra wouldn't give his daughter's hand in marriage to Nimāi Paṇḍita, whom would he have her marry?"

Meanwhile, Sanātana Miśra had always hoped that Viṣṇupriyā would be wed to Nimāi Paṇḍita. In fact, for a long time Sanātana Miśra himself had been considering just such a match. As he had seen his daughter approaching marriageable age, he had begun keeping his eye our for a boy who would make her a suitable husband. After surveying the field, he concluded that the best possible husband for her would be Nimāi Paṇḍita. He was the only choice of Sanātana Miśra, who found that in personal beauty and in good qualities Nimāi Paṇḍita had no equal. His age was also just right. He thought that if such a perfect match could take place, he would be extremely fortunate. He prayed to Hari, "O Lord! If I have any pious credits as a result of my previous births, let my daughter and Nimāi Paṇḍita be married."

One day, just as the *brahmaṇa* and his wife were confidentially discussing the possibility of arranging their daughter's wedding, Kaśinātha Paṇḍita, the matchmaker sent by Śacīdevī, arrived. Sanātana Miśra offered him a respectful seat and a glass of sweet water. Sanātana Miśra thought within himself that the appearance of the famous matchmaker Kaśinātha Miśra must bode well for him. He began to think that perhaps his prays had been answered. He said, "Paṇḍita! What news?" Kaśinātha Paṇḍita smiled and explained to him all about Śacīmata's plans for the marriage of Nimāi Paṇḍita and Viṣṇupriyā-devī.

This is recorded in the *Caitanya-Bhāgavata* as follows: Kaśinātha Paṇḍita said, "You should give your daughter in marriage to Viśvambhara Paṇḍita, and thus arrange a wedding between the divine Lord and your daughter, the highly chaste and gentle Viṣṇupriyā-devī. Viṣṇupriya and Nimāi Paṇḍita would make a perfect match. It would be a marriage made in heaven, just as the wedding of Rumkinī-devī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

Hearing the news of Kāśinātha Paṇḍita, Sanātana Miśra and his wife felt as if their souls had been stolen by happiness. The Supreme Lord, acting as the Supersoul within, knew their heartfelt desires to marry their daughter to Nimāi Paṇḍita and satisfied their desire.

Sanātana Miśra said, "O Kāśinātha Paṇḍita Prabhu, how is it that you come to suggest such a thing?" Then Kāśinātha Paṇḍita explained everything about Śacīdevī's proposals for the wedding and told him that marrying his daughter to Nimāi Paṇḍita would be the cause of supreme good fortune, both for his daughter and for his family. Sanātana Miśra was overjoyed, and discussed everything with relatives and friends for their approval. As all of them said, "This wedding should be performed immediately." eagerly set about making all the necessary arrangements with the matchmaker Kāśīnātha Paṇḍita, saying, ""By all means, I shall give my daughter's hand in marriage to Nimāi Paṇḍita. This will certainly enhance the good fortune of my entire family. Go to them and give them my assurances. You have my word."

In this way, Kāśīnātha Paṇdita, having set everything right with Sanātana Miśra, retruned to the house of with great satisfaction Śacīdevī and told her everything about their meeting. After hearing all this, Śacīdevī said, "Now I have done everything that I can. The rest is up to Śrī Hari; now everything is in the hands of Providence."

Nimāi himself, up to this point knew nothing of all this; but after everything was set, his mother informed him of the arrangements she had made and Nimāi gave his consent to the marriage. When the people of Nabadwīpa heard that Nimāi Paṇḍita was soon to be married they were filled with joy.

Different friends of the family and students of Nimāi Paṇḍita wanted to step forward and offer something charity so that the wedding would be a success, but a rich landowner named Bhuddhimānta Khān proclaimed, "I myself will bear the entire cost of the wedding!" Mukunda Sañjaya, in whose worship hall Nimāi Paṇḍita conducted his school said, "Listen, friend and brother: why should you bear all the expense? Let us share some of the cost with you. We all wish to ensure the success of this event." But Buddhimānta Khān refused saying, "Listen my brother: this wedding is not to be performed in the style of poor *brahmaṇas*, but in a manner entirely fit for a prince. This is not a time for brahminical austerity." Nimāi Paṇḍita's students also took the matter seriously and helped to see to it that the wedding was a grand one, with great pomp and circumstance.

Thereafter an auspicious day was selected, and at an auspicious time, the preliminary ceremonies began. The whole of Nabadwīpa turned out for the wedding of Śrī Nimāi Paṇḍita and Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriya-devī. Immense canopies were set up, and an enclosure was made with rows of plaintain trees. Śrī Nimāi Paṇḍita and his new bride looked beautiful together, dressed in fine garments. Decorated with all the traditional wedding ornaments, the two of them shone together on the raised wedding platform as radiantly as the spotless harvest moon. The temple was also finely decorated: the earth was

sprinkled with colored rice powder in paintings of auspicious symbols, and fresh green plaintain leaves created a festive atmosphere. The temple was also decorated with waterpots filled with fresh water, as well as mango leaves, lighted ghee lamps, new rice paddy, as well as pots filled with yogurt, and many other auspicious things.

Not only did the whole of Nabadwīpa turn out for the wedding, but people came from all the neighboring villages from miles around to see the wonderful event. Everyone was invited. The poets came and sang the songs they had composed in honour of the happy couple. Many friends and well-wishers came to congratulate Śacīdevī and express their best wishes for the nuptial bliss of Śrī Nimāi and Viṣṇupriyā-devī. As noon approached, musicians began playing their instruments—*mṛdaṅga*, *śanai*, big drums, cymbals, all arose together in song to create a beautiful sound. The professional poets chanted verses of praise, and everything was auspicious. Then Lord Viṣṇu was worshiped, *bhoga* was offered to the Deities and *arotika* was performed, and the auspcious wedding ceremony was performed.

As the wedding took place, everyone's eyes were upon Nimāi and Viṣṇupriyā as if to devour the beauty of the divine couple. The ladies present there all adored Nimāi, but so pure were their hearts upon seeing the holy spectacle that none of them felt the least bit of envy or jealously at Viṣṇupriyā-devī's good fortune. Within the inner parts of the house reserved for the ladies, the sounds of jubilation were uproarious. Some of them sounded the call of the peacocks as is traditionally done by Hindu ladies on festive occasions, while others blew on conches to celebrate.

All the Vaiṣṇavas present chanted the glories of Hari. And *brahmaṇas* chanted the *Vedas*, as the jewel of the twiceborn took his seat in their midst. The *brahmaṇas* surrounded him on all sides with great enthusiasm. At the wedding of the Lord the four directions were inundated by a sea of joy; those who did not drown in that sea of joy simply floated in bliss.

The ceremonial offerings of sweet water and betel nut to the new bride and groom were made. And one by one all the devotees and *brahmaṇas* stepped forward had their brows daubed with sandalwood pulp by the Lord, placed fragrant garlands of exotic flowers around their necks and gave them boxes of betel nuts. It was impossible to count all the *brahmaṇas* who had gathered there. Among them, some were greedy, and after standing in line once for garlands and betel-nut, they would again get in line, repeatedly receiving gifts of sandalwood, garlands, and betel. Everyone was lost in a sea of joy, and did not notice this, as Gauraṅga Himself ordered that gifts be given three times over for everyone. The stock of garlands, sandalwood paste, and betel turned out to be endless; this was a great miracle that no one could understand. What to speak of what the people

gathered there actually received, what was disgarded and left on the ground was enough for five weddings. Everyone cheerfully made their offerings of auspicious gifts to the Lord and Viṣṇupriyā-devī. And in this way, all of Nadia was drowned in the ocean of bliss.

Everyone said, "This purificatory ceremony is praiseworthy beyond belief: we have seen great wealth in Nabadwīpa before, but such a celebration on the eve of a wedding has never taken place. No one has ever given such charity to the *brahmaṇas* with such an open hand. Sanātana Miśra, the Rāja-paṇḍita, filled with delight, arrived with all manner of auspicious articles just suitable for the occasion, accompanied with friends, relatives, and *brahmaṇas* amdist a joyous display of dance, song, and musical performances. With a cheerful mind, he then performed the ceremony of anointing the Lord with perfume, and then the crowd began a triumphal chant in praise of the holy name of Hari.

Śrī Gaurasundara performed the customary cermonies, worshiping Viṣṇu and the ancestors amid a happy atmosphere of song and dance. Earthen vessels filled with water, unhusked rice, curd, lamps, and mango twigs decorated the hall and the courtyard as the banners waved. With all these decorations, an auspicious atmosphere was created. Then Śācīdevī in the compnay of the local ladies began to perform the customary rites, worshiping the Ganges and the goddess Śasthi. Finally she returned home and loaded the local ladies down with charity: she made gifts of rice, plaintains, ghee, betel, and vermillion. By the Lord's mystic power, she was able to give all these things in abundance beyond belief. All the women were drowned in ghee, rice, and vermillion beyond measure and everyone's desires were thus fulfilled and their minds pacified.

The mother of Viṣṇupriya-devī also rejoiced with the local ladies, and the pious Sanātana Miśra himself swam in the ocean of ecstatic delighht. Śrī Gaurasundara meanwhile, had finished performing all the duties enjoined by the *śāstras*, and sat smiling in a leisurely fashion for some time.

Thereafter, Śrī Gaurasundara satisfied the *brahmaṇas* by distributing great wealth in charity. He humbly gave them nice foodstuffs and fine cloth in charity, honoring everyone according to his status with appropriate gifts, respects, and affection. After all this, the *brahmaṇas* returned to their homes for their afternoon meals. Having already performed his ceremonial duties, Sanātana Miśra had returned home to prepare for the Lord's arrival.

As the afternoon wore on, the Lord's devotees and well-wishers took great pleasure in decorating the person of the Lord. They anointed his body with sandalwood paste and perfumed oils. Upon his forehead they painted a crescent moon with sandalwood paste. Then they crowned his forehead with a tiara and covered his body with garlands. After giving him beautiful garments to wear, they applied collyrium to his lotus eyes. Then they tied unhusked rice, *kuśa* grass and fine thread to his arm and placed

in His lotus hand a fresh plaintain leaf and a mirror. His ears were ornamented with golden earrings and his forearms and biceps with bangles and gold chains. And as they decorated the Lord's body, his devotees were enchanted and entranced.

As the sun began to set, everyone said, "Let us now perform the auspicious ceremony of starting for the house of the bride. After circumambulating Nabadwīpa, Nimāī Paṇḍita will arrive near the bride's house at the end of twilight. At that time, Buddhimānta Khāna, having prepared the palanquin, had it brought there. A loud vibration of chanting and songs arose, as the *brahmaṇas* chanted hymns from the *Vedas* and the poets again sang their verses. Śrī Gaurasundara, after receiving all the wedding gifts offered to the bride and groom, offered his humble respects to his mother, the *brahmaṇas*, and his *guru*, bowing down before their feet. After this Gaurasundara was carried upon a palanquin to the banks of the Ganges amidst cries of jubilation. After bathing in the Ganges and offering respects to Gaṅgadevī, he again sat upon the wedding palanquin as the poets sang auspicious prayers that resounded throughout the four directions with the glories of the Lord as the festival procession began.

The parade itself is wonderful to recall: thousands of torches were lit and various musical instruments created a sweet vibration as the singers sang and dancers danced. Behind the palanquin marched the foot-soldiers of Buddhimānta Khan and all his servants and bearers in parallel lines. Behind them marched the flag-bearers who held various multi-colored banners of wondrous designs and emblems. After the flag-bearers were the clowns and tumblers, magicians and dancing actors, entertaining the crowd. All kinds of musicians followed the procession with their various instruments: victory drums, war drums, wedding drums, *mṛdaṅgas*, *kholas*, *paṭaśas*, conches, flutes made of reeds, cymbals, *varaṅga*, horns, all produced a great concert. Hundreds of thousands of children danced in that procession as Śrī Gaurasundara smiled. Not only children behaved like children, but the old and wise also threw off their inhibitions and danced like jubilant peacocks.

They all halted on the banks of the Ganges for some time, where there was a wonderful concert of music, song, and dance. At last, after bowing to the Ganges and circumambulating the whole of Nabvadwīpa, the wedding procession of Nimāi Paṇḍita arrived at the home of Sanātana Miśra, where Viṣṇupriyā-devī waited eagerly to meet her new husband.

In this way, as the sun set over Nabadwīpa dhāma, Nimāi Paṇḍita arrived at the house of his waiting bride accompanied by music, torches and fireworks and followed by a garish parade and a huge crowd. On beholding the vast and superhuman procession, the people gathered there were awed. "Such opulence surpasses that of even the King of

Heavan or the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha," they said, "Never before have we seen such pomp and circumstance," they said. "What opulence!" Those unlucky *brahmaṇas* who failed to marry their own daughters to Nimāi Paṇḍita all though to themselves that they had missed an opportunity that only passes once in many lifetimes.

Upon reaching the house of Sanātana Miśra, there was an uproar of triumphal shouts of joy. The musicians, competing to defeat each other in dexterity and tempo, began playing faster and faster and the crowd became excited. The Rāja-paṇḍita, Śrī Sanātana Miśra came forward to greet the Lord and helping him down from the palanquin, he took him by the hand, led him to the seat of honor within the wedding hall and made him sit. He had made many grand arrangements to accommodate the bride and groom and was overjoyed to see Nimāi Paṇḍita's arrival at his home. After seating the Lord, he too took his seat, so that he could perform the reception ceremonies. Sanātana Miśra then offered the Lord water for washing his feet, and a fragrant mouthwash for rinsing his mouth. He also offered the Lord fine garments and ornaments, thus welcoming the Lord to his family and home.

After this, Sanātana Miśra's wife, in the company of the ladies present there did her part in the ceremony. She placed a finely woven wreath of fresh rice stalks and blades of *kuśa* straw upon the Lord's beautiful head and after performing the *arotika* ceremony and waving the lamp of seven wicks, she chanted various hymns, threw rice, and blew the conch. After all the customary rituals had been thus performed, they carried Śrī Viṣṇupriya-devī, Lakṣmī herself, into the wedding arena on a palanquin.

It is said that Nimāi Paṇḍita, royally dressed in the finery of his wedding garments put cupid himself to shame. When the Supreme Goddess of Fortune, Viṣṇupriyā appeared before the assembled devotees, *brahmaṇas*, and guests garbed in silk and richly adorned with jewels, she looked just like an angel from heaven.

With her radiance dazzling the eyes of all present, she performed the traditional circumambulation of the groom, walking in seven circles around Śrī Nimāi Paṇḍita, before offering herself at his feet by bowing down. According to tradition they were required to exchange their first glances with one another at that time, but due to her natural shyness, Viṣṇupriyā-devī was unable to look upon the Lord's holy face. But according to the customs of Hindu marriage this ceremony had to be performed. A screen was therefore placed around the bride and groom, that they might privately exchange their first glance at one another. At first glance they re-established their eternal relationship, for just as Lakṣmī and Narāyaṇa are eternally inseparable, Śrī Viṣṇupriya-devī and Śrī Gaurasundara are eternally related to one another as consorts.

At last the Supreme Lakṣmī, Viṣṇupriyā-devī exchanged garlands with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Gaura-Narāyaṇa, and at that time the crowd let out a tumultuous roar of jubilation. Viṣṇupriyā-devī first offered the garlands at the holy feet of the Lord, thus surrendering herself. After this, Lord Gaurasundara picked up the garlands and placed them around Viṣṇupriyā's neck. At this time, Lakṣmī and Narayaṇa, (Viṣṇupriya-devī and Śrī Gauranga) began throwing flowers at each other with great delight, while from above, in the heavens, all the gods headed by Brahmā invisibly showered flowers upon the divine couple.

At that time, various mock quarrels broke out between the families of the two parties as everyone laughed and joked with one another. The Lord smiled, and his smile brought bliss to the hearts of all who were assembled there. As thousands of torches burned brightly, the crowd became ecstatic. Their cries of joy filled the four directions with a pleasing vibration as the bride and groom beheld each other for the first time.

Then Sanātana Miśra with joyful heart sat down to officially give his daughter away to Nimāi Paṇḍita. Having washed his feet and rinsed his mouth, he performed the ceremony of bestowing his daughter's hand upon the Lord. At that time he gave the Lord as a dowry many cows, lands, and servants. After this the final fire sacrifice was performed, and having finished all the scriptural procedures and having observed all the rituals, ceremonies and customs of a proper Hindu wedding, they led the bride and groom into their new quarters within the palatial home of the Rāja-paṇḍita, Sanātana Miśra. And as the two of them resided there, the house of Sanātana Miśra was transformed into Vaikuṇṭha.

Who can describe the ecstasy tasted by Sanātana Miśra and his family upon the wedding of their beloved Viṣṇupriya-devī to Nimāi Paṇḍita? The same good fortune that was bestowed upon Janaka Mahārāja when his daughter Sīta was married to Rāma, the same good fortune that was showered upon Bhishmaka when his daughter Rukmiṇi was married to Śrī Kṛṣṇa was now being rained upon Śrī Sanātana Miśra along with his family.

Shri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura

Shrila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura took birth in the year 1586 Shaka era within the Nadia district of West Bengal in a place called Prasiddha Deva Gram. He appeared in the Raḍhīya line of brahamaṇas. He had two brothers: Shri Ramabhadra Chakravarti and Shri Raghunatha Chakravarti. Shrila Chakravarti Thakura went on to live in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal, in Saiyadabad, where he received mantra initiation from Shri Krishna Charana Chakravarti. He lived for a long time in the house of his gurudeva, where he wrote many books. Because Chakravarti Thakura lived for so long in Saiyadabad, he became known as a resident of Saiyadabad. In one of the final verses of his commentary on the *Alankara Kaustubha*, he himself has written: *saiyadabadanivasi shri vishvanatha sharmana, chakravartiti namneyam krita tika subodhini*. "Shri Vishvanataha Cakravarti, a brahmana residing in Saiyadabad, has composed this commentary on the *Alankara Kaustubha*." When Shrila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura lived in Nadiya, he closely studied the scriptures, beginning with a study of Sanskrit grammar, poetry, and rhetoric. It is said that even as a boy in school, he was an undefeatable scholar who could overcome anyone in argument and debate. From an early age, he was indifferent towards family life. For the purpose of binding his son in the contract of family life, Vishvanatha's father arranged for his marriage when he was very young. He remained a married man for only a short time. Soon he renounced his wife and home and went to live in Vrindavan. After this, his parents and relatives made many unsuccessful attempts to induce him to return to family life, but Vishvanatha Chakravarti was fixed in his determination to renounce wordly life and surrender himself completely to the service of Krishna.

After having come to Vrindavan Dhama, Shri Vishvanatha took up his residence in the bhajan kutir of Shri Krishna Das Kaviraja Goswami on the banks of the Radha-kunda, where there lived a disciple of Krishna das Kaviraja whose name was Mukunda das. There, Shri Vishvanatha Cakravarti made a careful study of the Goswami's literatures. In that holy place he later wrote many commentaries on the books of the Goswamis.

Shri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura established the worship of the deity of Shri Gokulananda. Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur was also sometimes known as Harivallabha das. Vishvanatha's title, "Chakravarti" was awarded to him by

the devotees. Generally this title designates one who maintains (*varti*) a circle (*chakra*) of influence. Hence *chakravarti* usually means "emperor," for the emperor's maintains his power over a vast circle. A more devotional explanation of this title is found in the introduction to Vishvanatha's *Svapna-Vilasamrita*. There is has been written *vishvasya natharupausau, bhaktiratna pradarshanat, bhakta chakre vartitatva, chakravartamaya bhavat*. "He who reveals the jewel of devotion to Vishvanatha, the Lord of the Universe, and thus expands the circle of bhakti is a"Cakravarti."

Shri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura has written many books, among which are the following:

Commentaries on *Srimad-Bhagavatam (Sararthadarshini-tika)*, *Bhagavad-gita (Sararthavarshini-tika)*, *Alankara Kaustubha (Subodhini-tika)*; *Ujjvala-nilamani*, *Ananda Vrindavana Champu (Sukhavartini-tika)*; Rupa Goswami's *Vidagdha-Madhava Natakam*, *Gopal-tapani-upanishad*; *Chaitanya-charitamrita*; and original works such as *Shri Krishna-Bhavanamrita Mahakavya*; *Svapnavilasamrita*; *Madhurya Kadambini*; *Stavamala-lahari*; *Aishvarya Kadambini* [Note: this is not the same *Aishvarya Kadambini* as that of Baladeva Vidyabhusana. Baladeva Vidyabhusan's book describes the opulences of Shri Krishna, whereas Vishvanatha's book by the same name deals with the philosophy of *achintya-bhedabheda-vada*, Shri Chaitanya's philosophy of inconceivable oneness and difference].

The *diksha-guru-parampara* of Shri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura is given as follows: Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Lokanatha Goswami, Narottama Thakura, Ganganarayan Chakravarti, Krishnacharan Chakravarti, Radharaman Chakravarti, Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura. Shri Krishna Charan Chakravarti and Radha Ramana Chakravarti both lived in Saiyadabad. Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura studied extensively under them. when he was in Saiyadabad before going to Vrindavan, where he met Mukunda das Goswami, a disciple of Krishna das Kaviraja Goswami and studied the Goswami literatures.

The *siksha-guru-parampara* is considered more important than the *diksha-guru-parampara*, because it follows the descent of revealed truth through its most significant representatives, as opposed to following a strictly sacerdotal heirarchy. The *siksha-guru-paramapara* from Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura is, according to Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, as follows: Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Svarup Damodara, Rupa Goswami and Sanatana Goswami (along with Raghunatha Das Goswami, Raghunath Bhatta Goswami, Gopal Bhatta Goswami), Shri Jiva Goswami, Krishna das Kaviraja

Goswami, Narottama Das Thakura (along with Shyamananda Prabhu and Shrinivasa Acharya), Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura.

Shri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura disappeared on the Vasant Panchami day in the month of Magh.

Lord's order and went in the direction of Sridhar's residence.
135-138

Now hear some stories about Sridhar, how he made a living from selling "khola" (or the trunk of the banana tree). He buys the khola joint and then cutting it into short pieces he sells them. Whatever in a day half of it he spend in buying offering for motner Ganga. With the other half he uses to maintain himself. This is the test of a true devotee of the Supreme Lord.
139-142

Sridhar is a very honest and truthful person, like Yudhisthira Maharaj, he always quotes the correct price of his wear and never once vacillates from it. Those who know this fact buys from him at the price he quotes. In this humble way this great soul lives in Navadvipa, known to people only as the 'khola seller'; his real self was unknown to all. He would spend the entire night engrossed in chanting the holy name of Krsna, forgetting everything including sleep.
143-146

The atheistic neighbors protested saying, "we cannot sleep in the night, Sridhar's screaming shatters the eardrums. That poor vagabond cannot fill his body and so now in the night he is kept awake by the pangs of hunger."
147-148

The atheistic neighbors invited sure doom for themselves in speaking in this manner, but Sridhara continued his spiritual activities unperturbed and remained always joyful. He loudly chanted the holy name all night long with overflowing love for Krsna.
149-150

The devotees who had gone to find Sridhara had covered only half of the way to his house, and could already hear his loud chanting. Following the voice they came to Sridhara's house. They said to him, "Please come with us O holy one and meet Lord Caitanya, we are greatly blessed being in your august presence."
151-153

When Sridhara heard the mention of Lord Caitanya he became overwhelmed with ecstatic feelings and feel unconscious to the ground. Quickly the devotees picked him up, and they very slowly and gently led him to the Lord.
154-155

Lord Caitanya was extremely happy to see Sridhara and called out loud and warm invitations to him saying, "Come, come, You have amply worshipped Me, many lifetimes you spent in My devotional service. In this life you have rendered abundant devotional service, I have tasted your 'khola' countless of times. many times I took different things from your hands, you have forgotten the verbal exchanges we had."
156-159

When Lord Caitanya was manifesting His pastimes as a scholar, He acted bold and insolent. During this time hiding His real identity the Lord would daily enjoy Sridar's company under the pretext of bargaining with him. He would go to his shop and

Lives of the Saints

Ramanuja

caitrādram sambhavam viṣnor darśana-sthāpanotsukam
tuṇḍira-maṇḍale śeṣa-murtim rāmanujam bhaje

"I worship Śrīpād Rāmanūja, the incarnation of Ananta, who took birth in the month of Caitra (April-May) under the sixth lunar mansion in the Tundirades, and who came upon this earth to establish the philosophy of Śrī Viṣṇu."

Four major schools or *sampradāyas* of Vaiṣṇavism are considered authorized by Vaiṣṇavas everywhere: the Brahmā, Śrī, Rudra, and Kumāra Sampradāyas. While Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas follow the disciplic line of Viṣṇu worship originating with Brahmā, Śrīpād Rāmanujācārya is the founder-*ācārya* of the Śrī Sampradāya, the school of Vaiṣṇavism or Viṣṇu worship descending from the eternal consort of Viṣṇu known as Lakṣmīdevī or Śrī. His commentaries on Vedānta rival those of Śaṅkārācārya, especially in Tamil-speaking South India, where Śrī Vaiṣṇavism is prominent to this day. He propounded the Vedantic philosophy known as *Viṣiṣtādvaita-vāda*, or qualified monism. The most famous among his numerous writings are his commentary on Vedānta (*Śrī Bhāṣya*), his commentary on *Bhagavad-gīta*, his *Vedānta-Sāra*, and the *Vedārtha-Saṅgraha*.

Many biographies of Ramanuja were compiled shortly after his passing, including the Sanskrit *Prappanāmṛtam* of Anantācārya and various Tamil works. These authorized sources provide quite a detailed portrait of Rāmanuja's life and teachings. Before we consider Ramanuja's importance in the development of Vaiṣṇava philosophy and practice, however, we must first consider the South Indian Vaiṣṇava traditions from which Ramanuja came and which influenced him.

THE PREVIOUS ACHARYAS—
NATHAMUNI

The first prominent *ācārya* of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava school to formulate a systematic theology of devotion was Śrī Nāthamuni who appeared as the son of a scholarly South Indian *brahmaṇa* in the year 908 A.D. Nāthamuni was the first important teacher to bring together the teachings of the Vedic Sanskrit texts and the ancient Tamil hymns of the Alwars, (South Indian saints who are famous as incarnations of the divine paraphernalia of Viṣṇu, such as his disc, conch, lotus, wheel, garland and so on). Nāthamuni was responsible for compiling the "Tamil Vedas." These were a collection of prayers, devotional songs, and hymns to Viṣṇu written by the Alwars in the Tamil language. These hymns, known as the *Prabandha*, are sung to this day before the deity of Viṣṇu in

the templeat Śrī Raṅgam, the traditional headquarters of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas and the most famous temple in South India. At the end of his life, Nāthamuni was the temple commander at the Śrī Raṅgam temple.

Nāthamuni's son, Iśvaramuni, died at an early age while his wife was still pregnant. Her child, Nāthamuni's grandson later became famous as Yamunācārya, the direct spiritual precursor of Rāmanuja himself. After the death of his own son, Nāthamuni took *sannyāsa*. Because of his vast learning, he was given the name "Muni" and because of his development in yogic perfection, he was famous as "Yogindra." His systematic philosophy of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism is formulated in his treatise on logic, *nyāya-tattva*, and his views on the relationship between *bhakti* and mystic yoga are given in his book *Yoga-rahasya*.

YAMUNACARYA

After Nāthamuni, Śrī Yamunācārya was the foremost exponent of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism before Rāmanuja. Born about 953 A.D. in Madura, the capital of the kingdom of Pandura, Yamuna was raised by his mother and grandmother, as his father had passed away and his grandfather, Nāthamuni had taken *sannyāsa*. Although he was an orphan, he did well in his studies and soon surpassed all his fellow students in scholarship. The academic genius of the young Yamuna amazed everyone. His attention to his studies and proficiency in the scriptures endeared him to his teacher, Śrī Bhāṣyācārya and his sweet and beautiful nature made him the darling of his classmates.

When Yamuna was only twelve, he won a kingdom through the power of his wits. At that time, the royal *paṇḍita* of the Pandya king of Cola had succeeded in making all the other *paṇḍitas* in his country look like fools. He was famous as "Vidvajjanakolahala" which means "One who throws scholars into an uproar." The royal *paṇḍita* was very dear to the king who patronized him lavishly. Vidvajjanakolahala used to extract an annual tax from all the *paṇḍitas* in the land. Those who didn't pay had to face the royal *paṇḍita* in argument and be humiliated and subsuquently punished. For fear of losing their reputation as scholars, everyone used to regularly pay this tax without argument. One day a disciple of the royal *paṇḍita* arrived at the *āśrama* of Yamuna's guru demanding the tax. Yamuna's guru was away at the time and Yamuna himself refused to pay the tax, considering it to be an insult to his *gurudeva*. He sent the disciple back with the message that an insignificant follower of Bhaṣyācārya would challenge the world-conquering royal *paṇḍita*, Vidvajjanakolahala in open debate.

When the news of the twelve-year old boy's challenge came to the royal *paṇḍita*, he simply laughed. "All right," he said. "Summon this scholar here and let us match wits." By the king's own order a day was set for the debate, and at the appointed time the boy scholar was brought before the royal court on a lavish palanquin. Seeing the boy's

beauty, the queen was charmed. She instantly took his side, while the king favored his own *paṇḍita*. A wager was settled on by the king and queen. If the king's *paṇḍita* won the debate, the queen was to submit to the king's every whim. If the queen's favorite, the beautiful boy *paṇḍita*, won the debate, the king was to award Yamunācārya half the kingdom.

First the royal *paṇḍita* examined the child, asking him many obscure questions about Sanskrit grammar which Yamuna answered perfectly. Then it was Yamuna's turn to examine the scholar. He said, "I will state three maxims. If you can refute them, I shall admit defeat. The first is this: your mother is not barren."

The royal *paṇḍita* was dumbfounded. To refute this maxim would be do deny his own birth. Unable to answer, he stood silent.

Yamunācārya continued: "My second proposal is this: The king is righteous. Refute this if you dare."

Again the *paṇḍita* was silenced. How could he argue that his own king was impious?

Finally the boy said: "My third proposal is this: The queen is chaste. Refute this and I am defeated."

Unable to refute these propositions, the *paṇḍita* fought back. "You are proposing things which are irrefutable. By asking me to challenge the piety of the king and the chastity of the queen you are committing treason and blasphemy. How dare you ask this of me! This is an outrage. If you think these propositions can be refuted then refute them yourself and be damned as an offender to the throne. Otherwise admit your insolence and hang your head in shame."

The *paṇḍitas* followers filled the arena with applause, and the king felt confident that his champion had successfully turned back the challenge of this impudent boy. But Yamunācārya was not finished. "As you wish," he said. "I shall refute these propositions myself. First I asked to to refute the proposal that your mother is not barren. Since you have failed to do so, I must cite the Manu Smṛti on this matter. According to the Laws of Manu, "If a woman has no more than one child, she may be considered barren." (*eka-putro hy aputrena lokavādāt*, *Manu-Saṁhita*, 9.61, *Medhatithi Bhashya)*. Since your mother had only one son, the proposal that she is not barren is refuted.

"Now the second proposal: the king is pious. I asked you to refute this, but you were unable to do so. The Laws of Manu also state that since he is responsible for their protection, the king assumes one sixth of the results of the pious or impious deeds of his subjects. (*sarvato dharmaṣad bhāgo rājo bhavati rakṣataḥ, adharmadapi ṣad bhāgo bhavatyasya hyarakṣataḥ*, *Manu-Saṁhita*, 8.304, *Medhatithi Bhashya*) Since this is Kali-yuga, the people

in general are naturally impious, and so the king must assume a heavy burden of impiety. This refutes the second thesis: the king is pious.

"As for my refutation to the third proposal—the queen is chaste." With this the crowd became quiet. The queen herself blushed. Yamunācārya's supporters wondered, how the boy could refute this proposition and conquer the *paṇḍita* without embarrassing the queen. Yamunācārya continued, "The Laws of Manu state that a great king is the representative of the gods. The gods—Agni the fire-god, Vayu the wind-god, Surya the sung-god, Chandra the moon-god, Yama the lord of death, Varuna, Kuvera, and Indra—are all present in the body of the king. The queen, therefore is wedded to more than just one man. When a woman is married to more than one man how then can she be chaste? Thus the third proposition is refuted."

The crowd was astonished. The boy scholar had certainly defeated the royal *paṇḍita*. The queen was jubilant and embraced Yamunācārya, saying, "Alabandaru," meaning "one who conquers." The court *paṇḍita* was disgraced. The king, who had been defeated in his wager with the queen, arose and said, "My boy, Alabandaru, child-scholar that you are you have defeated my royal *paṇḍita*, the terror of scholars—Vidvajjanakolahola himself. His pitiful life is now yours to do with as you see fit. I commend him into your hands. As for yourself, I promised the queen to give you half my kingdom upon your victory here. Now that you have won, I humbly request you to accept half my kingdom as your reward." The king awarded to Yamunācārya the place which is now called Ālavandara-meḍu.

Yamunācārya, who had won the title of "conqueror" now became famous as Alabandaru, the boy-king. As the years passed, he became involved more and more in the affairs of state, practically forgetting the legacy of his grandfather, Nāthamuni. Surrounded by kingly opulence and royal power, he gradually became entrenched in the position of a king. Absorbed in politics, he had little time for spiritual affairs.

About this time, Alabandaru's grandfather, Nāthamuni, had passed away, but before he left this world, he called his most confidential disciple Nambi to his side and entrusted him with a sacred task: to inspire Yamunācārya to renounce his kingdom and champion the cause of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. Yamunācārya was uniquely qualified to propogate Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. No one else could take the place of Nāthamuni.

Years passed. Finally the time came to spur Yamunācārya to action. Nambi, remembering the order of his *gurudeva* set out to confront Yamunācārya and convince him of the need to renounce the world and preach. When he arrived at the palace gates, however, he was turned away. It was not easy for a humble mendicant to get an interview with the great King Alabandaru. Through inquiry, Nambi came to know who the royal

cook was. One day, while the cook was returning from the marketplace with fresh produce, Nambi stopped him and gave him some vegetable greens called *tuduvalai*, which are supposed to promote mental purity and increase one's tendency towards contemplation and spiritual life. He asked to cook to please prepare these greens regularly for the welfare of the king. The pious cook understood the rarity and purity of these greens and was pleased to cook them for the king. From that day on, he began regularly preparing them for the king's lunch. The king very much enjoyed the greens, and Nambi would regularly supply the cook with them.

One day, Nambi held back. The king missed his greens and asked the cook why they had not been prepared. When the cook explained about the mysterious mendicant who supplied these greens, the king's interest was piqued. "The next time this *sādhu* comes," the king ordered his royal cook, "bring him before me."

The next day, when Nambi returned with the greens, the cook brought him before the king and introduced him. "What do you want of me?" the king asked. "Why do you bring these greens every day for no payment?" Nambi requested a private audience. The king ordered all his attendants to leave them alone, and when everyone had gone he offered Nambi a seat. "Please speak," he said.

Nambi then told Alabandaru of his grandfather's passing. He told him of Śrī Nāthamuni's anxiety that the *sampradāya* of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism needed a champion, a great scholar who could defeat opposing schools of philosophy and establish the religious principles of their tradition. Only Yamunācarya was qualified enough to do this, but he had now become King Alabandaru, a ruler of men attached to royal luxury and power. Gradually Nambi awoke in Yamunācārya's heart a desire to renounce the throne and lead the Śrī Sampradāya. After deeply considering the message of *Bhagavad-gīta* in Nambi's company he visited the temple of Śrī Raṅgam, where he accepted the *mantra* from Nambi and committed himself to giving up the opulence of royalty and taking up the mission of his grandfather.

After surrendering himself fully to a life of spiritual discipline, contemplation and devotion, Śrī Yamunācārya went on to become a great teacher. He quickly became the intellectual and spiritual leader of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, highly regarded for his realization, his scholarship, and his synthesis of Nāthamuni's system of philosophy with the system of *Pañcaratra* worship ordained by the *Vedas*. Yamunācārya's unquestioned status as a *brahmaṇa* helped him to establish his *Pañcaratrik* version of Vedānta above the protests of the followers of Śaṅkarācarya. Thus he increased the prestige of Vaiṣṇavism and Kṛṣṇa-bhakti by demonstrating both its scriptural basis and its spiritual superiority to mundane casteism. Among his writings are the famous devotional prayers to Viṣṇu known as the

Stotra-ratnam, the *Jewel of Prayers*. His writings also include various philosophical and theological works: the *Gita-sangraha*, an explanation of his views on *Bhagavad-gita*; his *Agama-pramanya*, expounding the synthesis of the *Pañcaratra* tradition with his version of Vaiṣṇava Vedānta; and other important doctrinal works, such as the *Siddhitraya* or *Threefold Perfection* (of which only fragments survived him) and the *Atma-siddhi*, or *Treatise on Self-realization*.

Yamunācārya's principle writings are in Sanskrit. Writing in Sanskrit was for Yamunācārya somewhat of a strategic departure from the tradition of the South Indian Alwars, who wrote in Tamil. By writing his scriptural commentaries in Sanskrit, however, Yamunācārya hoped to establish the South Indian tradition within a more classic framework of exposition acceptable to a wider range of Vedic scholars. In this way, he laid the groundwork for Ramanuja to establish Śrī Vaiṣṇavism as an orthodox *sampradāya*, or major school of theology.

The general outline of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, as well as many of its details were chalked out by Yamunācārya in his writings. It remained for Ramanuja to fill in that outline, to etch out its finer details, to establish a more orthodox Śrī Vaiṣṇavism in the collective consciousness of South India, and to build a place in history for the Śrī Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

Yamunācārya attracted many followers and disciples; history records the names of only twenty of them. Although they were sincere and devoted to their beloved *gurudeva*, none of them were blessed with the deep scholarship or determined energy required to carry on his great work in a significant way. It was left to Śrī Ramanujācārya to fulfill Yamunācārya's hopes for the future of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.

Periya Tirumalai Nambi, who is also called Śrī Śaila Pūrṇa in some accounts, was Yamunācārya's favorite follower. Under the guidance of Yamunācārya, he accepted the renounced order of life and lived with his *guru*, serving him to the very end. Nambi had two sisters, named Bhudevī and Śrīdevī, after the two consorts of Lord Śrī Venkateśvara. Bhudevī married a pious *brahmana* named Asuri Keśavācārya. Keśavācārya lived in Śrī Perumūdūra, about twenty-six miles from Madras. After some time, a child was born to them. He was named Lakṣmana by Nambi, after Lakṣmana, the brother of Śrī Rāmacandra. According to Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, Ramanuja was an incarnation of Lakṣmana himself. Since Lakṣman had been a great devotee of Rāma the boy soon became known as Rāma-anuja, or "follower of Rāma."

According to Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, Rāmanuja was born on the fifth day of the full moon in the month of Caitra in 1017 A.D. Rāmanuja's family belonged to the caste of Vaḍama *smarta-brahmaṇas*, who were formal Vedic scholars. Ramanuja's father

Keśavācarya was very much attached to the performance of Vedic sacrifices or *yajñas*. For this reason he became famous as Sarvakratu or the performer of all kinds of sacrifices. When the boy came of age, Keśavācārya immersed him in Sanskrit education, teaching him grammar, logic, and the *Vedas*. Although Rāmanuja was well-schooled in brahminical learning, however, he had not yet been exposed to the deeply devotional Tamil hymns glorifying Śrī Viṣṇu. Still, his natural devotion had already been awakened by association with a non-brahmaṇa disciple of Śrī Yamunācārya named Kañcīpurna, and Ramanuja demonstrated a saintly nature even from his early childhood. As time passed he underwent all the purificatory rites of a pious Hindu, including the sacred thread ceremony and was married, at the age of sixteen.

Only a month after the wedding, Ramanuja's father became gravely ill and passed away. After the passing of his father, Rāmanuja moved along with his family to Kāñcipuram, where he entered the academy of Yadava Prakāśa, a Vedāntist of the impersonalist Śaṅkarite school. According to some commentators, the decision to enroll Rāmanuja in the school of a non-Vaiṣṇava is evidence that his family was not strictly devoted to Viṣṇu but were merely caste *brahmaṇas* interested in insuring that their son would become a good scholar. Others are convinced that this was merely Ramanuja's strategy to become well-versed in the arguments of Śaṅkarācārya before thoroughly refuting them in his own commentaries.

Rāmanuja soon excelled among the students of Yadava Prakāśa and become his teacher's favorite student. Yadava Prakāśa preached the theory of nondualism, and stressed the illusion of all form, including the form of Śrī Viṣṇu. As Rāmanuja's devotion to Viṣṇu blossomed, his disgust with this philosophy grew. Still, out of respect for his teacher he avoided conflict.

Soon, however, the day arrived when he could no longer tolerate the impersonalism of Yadava Prakāśa. One day Rāmanuja was massaging his *guru's* back as Yadava Prakāśa explained a verse from the *Candogya Upaniṣad*. The verse contained the words *kapyāsam pundarīkam evam akṣinī*. Following the interpretation of Śaṅkarācārya, Yadava Prakāśa explained that *kapy* means "monkey" and *āsanam* means "ass." The verse therefore, as interpreted by Yadava Prakāśa was translated to mean, "Lord Viṣṇu's lotus eyes are as red as a monkey's ass."

Ramanuja was enraged at this blasphemy, and the hot tears flowed which from his eyes in anguish fell upon his *guru's* back. Yadava Prakāśa could understand that his disciple was disturbed, and inquired as to what the problem was. When Ramanuja took issue with his *guru's* interpretation, Yadava Prakāśa was astonished. He demanded Rāmanuja's interpretation. Rāmanauja explained that *kapyāsam* means "that which sits

upon the water and flourishes by drinking,"—in other words, a lotus. So the meaning of the verse is that the lotus eyes of Viṣṇu are as beautiful as the red lotus which blossoms in the water."

When Yadava Prakāśa saw his disciple's expertise in defeating his argument, he knew that he had a powerful rival in his midst. From that day on, he began plotting Rāmanuja's murder. He conspired with his disciples to go on pilgrimage to the Ganges and kill Ramanuja in a secluded place. After killing Ramanuja, they would bathe in the Ganges to expiate the sin. Fortunately; Ramanuja's cousin learned of the murder plot and warned Ramanuja, who managed to escape unharmed. After some time Yadava Prakāśa returned to Kañcipuram, and Ramanuja continued going to his lectures, although inwardly he was looking for another path.

At Yamunācārya himself went to vist Ramanuja, but when he came to Kañci he saw that Ramanuja was still a follower of Yadava Prakāśa and so Yamunācārya did not approach him. It is said that Yamunācārya watched him from a distance and prayed for Ramanuja to become the *darśana-pravartaka*, or philosophical preceptor of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya.

About this time, the king of Kañcipuram called for Yadava Prakāśa. His daughter was possessed by a *brahma-rakṣasa*, a *brahmaṇa* ghost. Yadava Prakāśa was called as an exorcist, and when he arrived with his disciples, he was brought before the king's daughter and asked to relieve her of the influence of the ghost. Speaking through the girl's mouth, the ghost insulted Yadava Prakāśa and laughed at him. Ramanuja was asked to try, and when he came before the girl, the *brahmaṇa* ghost said, "If Ramanuja blesses me with the dust of his lotus feet, I shall leave this girl." Ramanuja did so upon which the girl was cured, and the king was deeply indebted to him.

After this humiliation before Ramanuja, it was not long before Yadava Prakāśa told Ramanuja to leave his *āśrama*. The final split between them came when Yadava Prakāśa was discussing the meaning of two Upaniṣadic texts: *saravam khalv idam brahma* (*Candogya Upaniṣad* 3.1, "everything is Brahman") and *neha nanasti kiñcana* (*Katha Upaniṣad* 4.11, "there is no distintion"). Yadava Prakāśa discussed these verses at length while explaining the theory of oneness promoted by Śaṅkarācārya with great eloquence. After Yadava Prakāśa was finished speaking, Rāmanuja gave his own interpretation.

Rāmanuja explained that *sarvam khalv idam brahman* would mean "the whole universe is Brahman, if it were not for the word *tajjalan* in the next part of the verse, which qualifies the meaning. Rāmānujācārya held that the means not that the universe is Brahman, but that it is *pervaded* by Brahman. From Brahman the universe comes, by Brahman it is sustained, and into Brahman it ultimately enters, just as a fish is born in

water, lives in water, and is ultimately dissolved into water. Still a fish is not water, but a separate entity entirely. In the same way the universe, although existing within Brahman is different from Brahman. Just as a fish can never be water, so the universe can never be Brahman. As to the second verse, *neha nanasti kiñcana*, according to Rāmanuja it does not mean "No distinction exists," but rather that things are not distinct in that they are are all interconnected, just as pearls are strung on a thread. Since all things are inter-related and inter-connected, in a certain sense it may be said that there is no distinction to be made between them. All things are related to Brahman and as such do not have any existence which is distinct from Brahman. Still, while a certain unity can be seen in the inter-relatedness of all things, everything within the universe has its own distinct reality. Pearls strung on a thread have unity; collectively they form an organic whole, a necklace. Still, each individual pearl has its own unique qualities. While spirit, matter, and God may be seen as one organic whole, still all of them have their unique qualities. Therefore, Rāmanuja argued, the principle of absolute oneness as argued by Śaṅkarācārya cannot stand; rather the principle of unity characterized by different qualities must be accepted.

After leaving Yadava Prakāśa, Ramanuja was advised by his mother to take guidance from Kāñcipurna, the non-brahmaṇa Vaiṣṇava whose devotion Ramanuja greatly revered. Kāñcipurna advised him to serve the Viṣṇu diety in the temple of Lord Varada by carrying water every day to the temple. He began serving Kāñcipurna with great devotion, and soon was accepted as his disciple. Although Kāñcipurna was by birth a member of the *śudra* caste and Rāmānujācārya was a *brahmaṇa*, this never influenced Rāmānujācārya's devotion for him. He accepted Kāñcipurna as his *guru* without reservation. Rāmānujācārya's wife, however, could not tolerate her husband's acceptance of a *śudra* as a *guru*, and did her best to discourage Rāmānujācārya from remaining in his company.

Yamunācārya by this time was very old. Wracked by illness, he was on the verge of passing from this world when he heard that Rāmānujācārya had left the school of Yādava Prakāśa and had begun serving the humble Kāñcipurna, who was famous as a great devotee of Viṣṇu. He sent some disciples to bring Rāmānujācārya. When Rāmānujācārya heard the news, he immediately set out for Śrī Raṅgam, the headquarters of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, where Yamunācārya lay dying. But by the time he arrived at the side of Yamunācārya it was too late. The master had passed from this world, entering Vaikuṇṭha and the eternal service of Śrī Viṣṇu.

At that time, Rāmānujācārya noticed that three fingers on the right hand of the master were closed. He asked the disciples of Yamunācārya if he had been accustomed to hold his hand in such a way, and they replied that it was highly unusual. Śrīpād

Rāmanuja could understand that this unusual gesture of the three clenched fingers represented the three unfulfilled wishes of Yamunācārya. He then vowed to fulfill these three wishes. He promised to teach the people in general the religion of surrender to Viṣṇu, training them in the five *saṁskāras*, or purificatory processes. As he did so, one of Yamunācārya's fingers relaxed. Rāmānujācārya then vowed to comment on the hymns of the Alvars, the South Indian saints, and with this the second finger relaxed. Finally Rāmānujācārya promised to write a scholarly commentary on the *Vedānta-sutras* expounding the principles of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism as the ultimate truth of the *Vedas*. With this the last clenched finger was relaxed. A look of spiritual peace came over the lotus face of Rāmānujācārya's divine master, Śrī Yamunācārya, as if to say that he could now depart peacefully, knowing that his mission was in good hands.

Upon his return to Kañcipurna, Rāmānujācārya gradually became completely disinterested in his family life, his beautiful wife and home, and absorbed himself deeply in the service of his *guru* Kañcipurna with whom he began spending most of his time. As Rāmānujācārya spent more time at the temple, his wife became unhappy that her husband was ignoring her. She was further humiliated by the fact that he was neglecting her to serve a low-born *sudra*.

One day, Rāmānujācārya invited Kañcipurna for dinner, thinking that by so doing he would be able to take the remnants of his *guru's prasāda*, and so become blessed. Kañcipurna, being very humble arived early, before Rāmanuja returned home. Kañipurna explained to Ramanuja's wife Kambalakṣa that he had service to do in the temple and could not stay for long. With this, Kambalakṣa quickly fed him and sent him away. After Kañcipurna had left, she took a long stick and carefully picked up the banana leaf upon which he had dined, so as not to soil her hands with what she thought to be the contaminated remnants of an untouchable. After ordering her maidservant to clean the room carefully, she bathed in order to purify herself. When Rāmānuja returned and heard of the insult to his *guru*, he was enraged.

One day, while drawing water from a well, Rāmānujācārya's wife met the wife of his guru, Kañcipurna. When the water from their waterpots accidentally became mixed, Rāmānujācārya's wife cursed Kañcipurna's wife, thinking that her waterpot had become contaminated by the water of an outcaste. Whend Rāmānujācārya came to know of this insult, he was furious. He sent his wife home to her parents and left to take *sannyāsa*.

After leaving home, he went to the temple of Varadraja to see the beloved deity of Viṣṇu whome he had served for so long. After obtaining saffron cloth and all the necessary paraphernalia of the renounced order, he accepted the triple staff, (*tridaṇḍa*) of

the Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī*, symbolizing the complete surrender of mind, body, and words to Viṣṇu. With this, he became known as Yatirāja, "the king of the renounced order."

Soon after taking *sannyāsa*, Rāmānujācārya established his own monastery or *āśrama*, where he began training disciples in his systematic Vaiṣṇava interpretation of Vedānta as well as in the path of devotion to Viṣṇu. His *āśrama* was established near the temple in Kañci. His first disciple was his older sister's son, his nephew Mudali Āṇḍan, also known as Daśarathi. His second disciple was a learned and wealthy *brahmaṇa* named Kūraṭṭālvān, also known as Kureśa, who was renowned for his photographic memory.

One day the mother of Yadava Prakāśa saw Rāmānujācārya teaching his disciples and was impressed by his saintly qualities. She was a great devotee of Viṣṇu and was somewhat unhappy that her son, Yadava Prakāśa had become a follower of Śaṅkarācārya's impersonal monism. She encouraged Yadava Prakāśa to visit Rāmānujācārya. That night Yadava Prakāśa had a dream in which a divine voice instructed him to become Rāmānujācārya's disciple. The next day, upon visiting Rāmānujācārya, Yadava Prakāśa found him wearing the dress of a Vaiṣṇava. He asked him, "Why have you rejected the school of Śaṅkarācārya? Why have you adopted this Vaiṣṇava dress? Where is this sanctioned in the scriptures? Can you show any scriptural evidence supporting your behavior?"

With this, Rāmānujācārya instructed his foremost disciple, Kureśa, to enlighten Yadava Prakāśa with the scriptural evidence in support of Vaiṣṇava dress. He quoted extensively from the *Śruti*, saying, "Śruti is the best evidence. Therefore I shall cite some references from the *Śruti*.[1]

In the *Śruti* it is said:

sa te viṣṇorabja-cakre pavitre[2]
janmāmbodhim tartave carṇaṇinrā
mūle bāhvordadhate'nye purāṇa
liṅgānyaṅge tāvakānyarpayanti

"To free themselves from the ocean of repeated birth and death, the best of men decorate their bodies with the symbols of the lotus and *cakra* of Viṣṇu.

aibhirbayamuruk ramasya cihnai rahnkitā loke subhagā bhavāmaḥ
tad viṣṇo paramaṁ padaṁ ye'dhigaccanti läcchatā[3]

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[1] The following verses from *Śruti* are quoted by Vedānta Deśika, the next important *acārya* after Rāmanuja in his biography called *Sac-caritra-rakṣa*.

[2] From the *Ṛk-Baṣkala-sakha*

[3] From *Atharva-Veda*

"Just as those who go to the holy abode of Viṣṇu are decorated with the conch, lotus, disc, and club, so shall we also wear these marks and thus attain that divine abode.

upavit-ādi-baddhāryāḥ śaṅka-cakrādayas tathā[1]
brāhmaṇasya viśeṣeṇa vaiṣṇavasya viśeṣataḥ

"*Brahmaṇas* should not only wear the sacred thread, but they should also decorate their bodies with the conch, lotus, *cakra*, and club of Viṣṇu, thus identifying themselves as Vaiṣṇavas.

hare padakṛtiṁ ātmano hitāya madhye cchidram-urdhva-puṇḍram[2]
yo dhārayati sa parasya priyo bhavati sa puṇyavān bhavati sa muktimān bhavati.

"One who decorates himself with the *tilāka* markings resembling the lotus feet of Viṣṇu with a space in the middle becomes dear to the Paramātmā, becomes pious, and attains liberation."

After hearing Kureśa expound so perfectly the scriptural evidence for adopting the dress of a Vaiṣṇava, Yadava Prakāśa asked him, "Why do you say that Brahman has qualities ? This view (*viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda*) is not supported by Śaṅkarācārya. Where is the scriptural evidence for your position?

Agin Kureśa replied, citing the *Śruti*:

yaḥ sarvajñaḥ sarvavit[3]

"'[The qualities of the Supreme Absolute Truth are that] He is all-wise and omniscient.' His qualities are further described in the Upaṇiṣads as follows:

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁś ca vidyate[4]
na tat samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyateᴂ
parāsya śaktir-vividhaive-śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

"He does not possess bodily form like that of an ordinary living entity: He has a transcendental form of bliss and knowledge, and thus there is no difference between His body and His soul. All His senses are transcendentally divine. He is absolute substance. Any one of His senses can perform the action of any other sense. Nothing is greater than Him or equal to Him. His potencies are multifarious, and thus His deeds are automatically performed as a natural consequence of His divine will. In other words , whatever He wills immediately becomes reality. His divine energies are threefold: His knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*)

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[1] From the *Vayavya Upa-purāṇa*, a section of the *Brahmaṇḍa-saṁhita*.

[2] From the *Atharva-Veda*.

[3] *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*

[4] *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8

energy (also known as *cit-śakti* or *saṁvit-śakti*), His strength energy (*bala-śakti*, also known as the Lord's existence energy, *sat*, or *sandhinī-śakti*), and his pastime (*kriyā-śakti*) energy (also known as his ecstasy energy, *ānanda* or *hlādinī-śakti*).

nārāyaṇaḥ paraṁ brahma tattvaṁ nārayaṇaḥ paraḥ[1]

"Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth, Brahman. He is the Ultimate Reality.

hariḥ parāyaṇaṁ paraṁ hariḥ parāyaṇaṁ paraṁ[2]

punaḥ punarvadāmyahaṁ hariḥ parāyaṇaṁ paraṁ

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Śrī Hari. He alone is the ultimate shelter, the supreme refuge, the final resting place. Again and again I proclaim this fact: Śrī Hari is the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

In this way, Kureśa went on and on, citing one scriptural evidence after the next to establish the principles of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. Yadava Prakāśa was astounded at the profound scholarship of this disciple of Rāmānujācārya. Remembering his mother's advice to take shelter of Rāmānuja, remembering the divine voice in the dream that told him to surrender to Rāmānujā, and remembering all the offenses he had committed at the holy feet of that great saint, Yadava Prakāśa could contain himself no longer. He fell at the feet of Rāmānujācārya and prayed for his blessings. He submitted himself as a disciple of Rāmānuja, who immediately accepted him, giving him the name Govinda Jiyar.

Yadava Prakāśa later became a famous disciple of Rāmānujācārya. He freed himself from his attachment to the impersonal monism of Śaṅkarācārya. After taking *sannyāsa*, he used his great powers of scholarship to promote the cause of Rāmānujācārya and Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. He was no longer a proud scholar; now he was a humble devotee. In his final years, he was ordered by Rāmānuja to write a book on the proper religious conduct to be followed by Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs* of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava line. This book is called *Yati-dharma-sammuccaya*, and is still studied and followed by the *sannyāsīs* of the Śrī *sampradāya*.

As Rāmānuja's fame spread, the disciples of Yamunācārya in Śrī Raṅgaṁ begged Rāmānuja to come and lead them. Finally, after taking permission from his beloved deity Lord Varada, Rāmānuja left Kañcipuram for Śrī Raṅgaṁ, to begin his new life.

After arriving in Śrī Raṅgam, Rāmānujācārya immersed himself in studying the scriptures under the guidance of Mahāpurna, a prominent disciple of Yamunācārya. With the help of Mahāpurna, Rāmānujācārya became expert in many scriptures, including the *Nyasatattva*, the *Gitartha-sangraha*, the *Siddhitraya*, the *Brahmā-Sutra*, and the *Pañcaratras*.

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[1] *Taittiriya Nārāyaṇopaniṣad* 93.

[2] *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* 3.52

After some time Mahāpurna advised Rāmānujācārya to go to the great Goshtipurna and accept initiation in the Vaiṣṇava *mantra* from him.

At the behest of Mahāpurna, Rāmanuja approached Goshtipurna for the *mantra*, but was refused, for Goshtipurna was reluctant to give such a confidential *mantra* to a relative newcomer. Rāmānujācārya approached Goshtipurna 18 times with great humility, finally breaking into tears and pleading for his mercy. At last Goshtipurna gave him the *mantra*, after first swearing him to absolute secrecy. When Rāmanuja had vowed never to repeat the *mantra* to anyone else, Goshtipurna whispered the *mantra* in his ear saying, "This *mantra* is most powerful. Whoever chants it will attain liberation; he will return to the spiritual Vaikuṇṭha planets where he will achieve the personal service of the Lord."

As he left the temple and proceeded towards Śrī Raṅgam, a crowd gathered around Rāmānujācārya. They had heard that he was to receive the *mantra* from Goshtipurna, and begged to know its secret. Inspired to distribute the magic of the *mantra* that could free anyone who chants it from material existence, Rāmanuja announced to the crowd: "Please chant this *mantra: Om namo narayanaya.*"

The crowd was overjoyed, and felt that they had been truly blessed, but when the news reached Goshtipurna, he called for Rāmānuja. Outraged that his new disciple would disobey his order so quickly, he demanded an explanation. "I told you to keep this *mantra* a secret. Why have you so quickly revealed it to the masses? Do you know the penalty for such behavior?"

Ramanuja replied, "Yes, *gurudeva*, I may go to hell for disobeying your order."

"Then why have you done such a thing?"

" My beloved teacher, I realized that the power of the *mantra* given by you could deliver everyone who hears it. When I saw the earnest desire of these people to be saved from material life, I could not contain myself. I felt some divine inspiration to distribute your mercy to all of them. If this is a great sin, then I must be punished by your holiness. Condemn me to hell, then, if my sin warrants it. But please do not show your wrath to these simple people who begged me for the *mantra*."

When Goshtipurna saw the earnest sincerity of his disciple, his heart was moved. After all, what greater principle can there be than the distribution of the Lord's mercy. Although Rāmānuja had disobeyed the letter of his instructions about the *mantra*, he had understood the real spirit of the *mantra* itself. He would make a great preacher of the Śrī *sampradāya*, and had shown that he had the capacity to instill devotion in the hearts of the people in general. How could he then be condemned?

Goshtipurna fell at Rāmānuja's feet. saying, "Forgive me, my child. It is you who are my master, and I the disciple. Who am I to take the role of your *guru?* How could I know your greatness? Accept me as your disciple."

After this incident, Rāmānujācārya's reputation spread far and wide. He was regarded as an incarnation of Lakṣmana himself. He began training more and more disciples, and his camp grew. He engaged many scholars in debate and defeated them by propounded his sytematic view of *Vedānta*, known as *Viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda*, or qualified monism. One such scholar was Yajñamurti.

Yajñamurti was a famous *paṇḍita* who had defeated many scholars in argument and had written many commentaries on the scriptures. He challenged Rāmānuja to a debate saying that if he lost, he would carry Rāmānuja's shoes and become his disicple. Rāmanuja, for his part, declared that if he was defeated, he would give up books and arguments forever. The debate began and went on for 17 days. Rāmānuja was discouraged. He prayed fervently to Lord Varada, his beloved Deity, for help. That night he had a dream in which the Deity assured him of victory, advising him to follow the line of reasoning given by Yamunācārya. Uplifted by his divine vision, Rāmānuja appeared in the arena of debate with renewed confidence. Before the debate began, however, Yajñamurti surrendered himself to the holy feet of Rāmānujācārya, saying, "You are my master. You are glowing with the confidence of one who is in connection with divinity. I realize now that it is futile to argue with you. Please accept me."

From that day on, Rāmānuja's reputation increased. During this time, he toured India with his disciples, traveling as far north as Kashmir, where he consulted the commentary of Bodhayana on the Vedānta Sutras. Rāmānuja was also a great advocate of proper Deity worship and had a habit of reforming the system of worship wherever he went. In this way, he standardized the system of worship throughout the Vaiṣṇava temples of India, eliminating many of the practices of nonVaiṣṇavas that had become traditional. His system was not, however, greeted with much enthusisam in Jagannātha Purī, where worship is performed according to the system of *rāga-marga*, or spontaneous devotion. It is said that after he attempted to reform the system of Deity worship there, Lord Jagannātha became disturbed. One night, as Rāmānuja slept, he was transported by the power of Jagannātha to Kurmasthan. When he awoke, he thought he had committed a great offense to Viṣṇu. Mistaking the deity of Kurma for a Siva-lingam, he thought that Viṣṇu had thrown him into a Śiva temple. When at last he realized that it was a temple of Lord Kurma, Ramanuja set about reforming the deity worship there.

After this, Rāmānuja wrote the *Śrī-Bhāṣya*, his commentary on Vedānta, and his fame spread still further. The king of Cola, who was a great follower of Śiva, sent a

petition to all the famous scholars of South India, demanding their signature. The petition declared Śiva to be the supreme. Many scholars signed, but Rāmānuja refused. When this came to the king's attention, he arranged to abduct Rāmānuja, who managed to escape with the help of his devoted follower, Kureśa. They exchanged garments, and Rāmānuja, disguised as a householder, slipped through the guards that surrounded his camp. Meanwhile the king's soldiers arrested Kureśa, who had put on the *sannyāsa* dress of Rāmanuja. This king was the same king whose daughter was saved from a ghost by Rāmānuja. When Kureśa was dragged before the king in the dress of Rāmānuja, the king demanded that he glorify Śiva as the supreme. Kureśa refused. Because Rāmānuja had helped the king's daughter, the king decided to be lenient. He told his servants not to kill their prisoner, but merely to put his eyes out for refusing to see the superior position of Śiva. After Kureśa was released, his eyesight was restored by a miracle. The king however, did not fare so well. He developed a black boil on his neck and died. Henceforth that king became famous as "Kṛmi-kantha," or worm-throat, because of the infection that killed him.

Meanwhile, Rāmanuja delivered many thousands of people to the cause of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism and established many temples. He traveled through what is now Madurai and Mysore, converting many Jains on his way. At one point he defeated one thousand Jains in argument, after which they committed suicide rather than become Vaiṣṇavas.

Rāmānuja was merciful not only to those in the renounced order, but also to those surrendered *gṛhasthas* who had given their lives to his mission. One such *gṛhastha* was Dhanurdāsa. When he met Rāmānuja, Dhanurdāsa was very much attached to his beautiful wife. One day, Rāmānuja asked him if he wanted to see a real beauty, and out of curiosity, Dharnurdāsa agreed. Rāmānuja took him to the temple of Narayana and made him behold the beauty of the deity. Upon realizing that the Lord's beauty eclipses all beauties of this world, Dhanurdāsa became a great devotee and follower of Rāmānuja.

Dhanurdāsa was an example of detachment. To teach detachment to one of his disciples, Rāmānuja once staged the following demonstration. He had one of his disciples go to the place where the *sannyāsīs* bathed to switch their clothes, so that after bathing there would be some confusion. When the *sannyāsīs*, who were all renowned scholars and renunciants, were finished bathing, they found that their clothes had been exchanged. One swāmī was wearing the cloth of another, and so an argument ensued. As one after another finished his bath and went to find his clothes, the argument grew more heated. In this way, these great scholars of renunciation were seen to be attached to some simple pieces of cloth.

Then Rāmānuja sent his disciple to the home of Dhanurdāsa, after first arranging for Dhanurdāsa to serve in the temple, thus making sure that he would not be at home. The disciple went to the home of Dhanurdāsa in the evening, and, following Rāmānuja's orders began stealing the jewelry from the body of Dhanurdāsa's wife. After stripping the ornaments from one side of her body, the disicple was about to go when suddenly she turned over in her sleep. The disciple was shocked and left through the window immediately. Rāmānuja had instructed him to wait outside the window for the return of Dhanurdāsa, to record his reaction. After some time, Dhanurdāsa returned home. At that time, Dhanurdāsa wife asked him, "Dhanurdāsa, is there something wrong at the temple?"

"No, my dear. Why?"

"I am worried that they are in need of money, but ashamed to ask for it. We must do something to help them."

"What makes you say that?"

"Because one of the devotees from the temple snuck in through the window and began taking the jewelry from my body. I think those poor saints must desperately need our help to do something like that."

"What did you do?"

"I turned over, but he fled through the window."

"Why did you do that? You scared him away! Now what will we do?"

"I didn't mean to scare him. I only turned over so that he could take the ornaments from the other side of my body as well."

Dhanurdāsa chastised her saying, "If you were not so affected by false ego, you would have given him all your jewels. Now what will we do? We have failed miserably!"

With this, his wife began to lament saying, "You are right. It is only my pride that kept me from surrendering everything. How will we ever make any advancement?"

From his hiding place Ramanuja's disciple was astonished at the humility and surrender of Dhanurdāsa and his chaste wife. When the disciple returned to his *guru*, he reported everything that had taken place. Rāmānuja then explained to him the meaning of both these events—the garments of the *sannyāsīs* and the jewels of Dhanurdāsa's wife: in this case, the *sannyāsīs* were so attached to some ragged bits of cloth that they were fighting over them, whereas Dhanurdāsa and his wife, although *gṛhasthas*, were so free from attachment to material things that they were ready to have their jewels stolen by the devotees if they were needed for the service of the Lord.

In this way, Rāmānuja continued to instructed his disciples both by example and by precept. His influence on Vaiṣṇavism is powerfully felt to this day. His commentary on *Vedānta*, the *Śrī Bhāṣya* is still considered to be the most formidable challenge to the

commentary of Śaṅkarācārya. It is the most famous of the Vaiṣṇava commentaries. Apart from the *Śrī Bhāṣya*, the most important of Rāmānujācārya's works are his commentary on *Bhagavad-gīta* and his *Vedārtha-saṁgraha*, which summarizes the essential Vedic principles. According to tradition, Śrīpād Rāmānujācārya lived to be 100 years old. His disciplic succession continues to this day in maintaining the traditions of Śrī Vaiṣṇava practice, deity worship and philosophy that he systemized in his lifetime. Rāmānujācārya passed away on the tenth day of the waning moon in the month of Phalguna, which corresponds to the month of January February on the Christian calendar.

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Lives of the Saints
Madhva

According to the Śrī Kurma inscriptions of Narahari Tirtha, his direct disciple, Śrīpad Madhvācārya was born between 1238 and lived for 79 years, until 1317 A.D. This is confirmed in the *Anu-Madhva-Carita*. According to the authorized biographies compiled by his disciples shortly after his passing away, Śrīpad Madhva was born in the village of Tulunāda, which is located about 8 miles to the southeast of the city of Uḍipi in Karnātaka. He came from a family of *śivālli-brahmaṇas* and was the son of Madhyageha Bhaṭṭa.

In his *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* commentary (CC *Madhya* 9.245), Śrīpad Bhakdivedānta Swāmī comments as follows: "In his childhood, Madhvācārya was known as Vāsudeva, and there are some wonderful stories surrounding him. It is also said that his father piled up many debts, and Madhvācārya converted tamarind seeds into actual coins to pay them off. When he was five years old, he was offered the sacred thread. A demon named Maṇimān lived near his abode in the form of a snake, and at the age of five, Madvācārya killed that snake with the toe of his left foot. When his mother was very disturbed, he would appear before her in one jump. He was a great scholar even in childhood, and although his father did not agree, he accepted *sannyāsa* at the age of twelve."

When he was only 12 years old, Madhvācārya left home and accepted the renounced order of life, under the guidance of Acyutaprekṣa, his *sannyāsa-guru*. Madhva's *sannyāsa* name was Pūrnaprajña Tīrtha. His deep study of the scriptures was unparalleled, and had convinced him of the uselessness of the Advaita interpretation of Vedānta. He was inspired to revive the original and pure interpretation of Vedānta which promotes personal theism. He was to do this on the basis of a profound and innovative interpretation of the scriptures, for which he was to become famous. This interpretation is known as *Dvaita-dvaita-vāda*, or pure dualism.

After his initiation, Pūrnaprajña spent some time in the *aśrama* of Acyutaprekṣa where he carefully studied the *Vedānta* commentaries of different *ācāryas*, beginning with the *Iṣṭasiddhi* of Vimuktātman. But soon, Pūrnaprajña's expertise in scriptural argument and his determination to establish personal theism as the conclusion of *Vedānta* grew to the point where he could defeat Acyutaprekṣa in argument. Recognizing Pūrnaprajña's superior scholarship, Acyutaprekṣa made him the head of his *aśrama*. Purnaprajña was also awarded the title Ānanda-tīrtha, by which he is often referred to in various scriptural literatures.

After he became the temple authority in the *aśrama* of Acyutapreksa, Pūrnaprajña began training disciples, preaching his interpretation of Vedānta and defeating many scholars from different schools of philosophy, including Buddhists, Jains, Advaitins, and various impersonalists, agnostics, logicians, and the practioners of materialistic religion. His success in defeating all opposing scholars inspired him to tour South India in an attempt to preach the philosophy of personal theism and devotion to Viṣṇu far and wide. At this time, he had completely formulated all the details of his philosophical system, but had not yet committed his system to writing.

His tour of South India was quite extensive: it took him from Uḍipi to the southernmost tip of India, (Kanyakumari)and from there to Rāmeśvaram, Śrī Raṅgam, and many other important holy places of pilgrimage. Wherever he went he debated the prominent scholars of the impersonal school, smashing their interpretations of Vedānta with his brilliant advocacy of dualistic theism. His scathing criticisms of Śaṅkarācārya's impersonal Vedānta met with stiff opposition, but no one could overcome him in scriptural argument or logical debate. It is said that when Madvha was at Kanyakumari he was challenged by a great impersonalist scholar of the Śaṅkara school to write his own commentary on Vedānta if he disagreed with the teachings of the master. At that time, it is said that Madhva promised to write his own Vedanta commentary, fully elaborating the proper conclusions of personal theism. At Śrī Raṅgam he also expressed a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the conclusions of Rāmanuja's *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda*, in that he felt it did not go far enough to refute the dangerous speculative philosophy of Śāṅkarācārya. This further added to the young Madhva's firm determination to someday compose his own commentary incorporating his own unique interpretation.

After completing his South Indian tour, Madhva decided to tour North India as well. With his resolve to complete his own Vedānta commentary growing day by day, he was eager to begin the work. But Madhva wanted to have the blessings of the author of Vedānta, Vedavyāsa himself, before beginning such an ambitious project. He set out for North India and the Himalays, then, in order to achieve the benedictions of Vedavyasa, for it was said that Vyāsa, being immortal, still resided in his *āśrama* at Badaraīnātha, although he never made himself visible to mortal eyes.

After a long journey by foot, Śrīpad Madhva finally arrived at the Anantamaṭha at Badarināṭha. There he remained for seven weeks, absorbed in fasting, prayer, and devotional meditation. Inspired from within, he hiked further up into the Himalayas, to Badarikāśrama, in upper Badarī, where Vyāsadeva has his hermitage. There he met Vedavyāsa and explained his commentary on *Bhagavad-gīta* to Vyāsa himself, who approved. When he met Vyāsa, he was given a *śalagrāma-śila* which is known as

Aṣṭamurtī. After discussing the scriptures with Vyāsadeva, Śrīpad Madhvācārya's understanding of their inner meaning became even more profou...d. He remained at Badarikāśrama for some months until he finished composing his commentary on *Bhagavad-gīta*, whereupon he returned to the Anantamaṭha. At that time Madhva's companion Satya Tīrtha wrote down the entire commentary. At this time, Madhva also wrote his commentary on Vedānta.

Bidding farewell to Badarīnātha, Madhva began the long journey home. On the way, he again met with and defeated many scholars of various philosophical schools. He traveled through Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, and Āndhradeśa. The *Madhva-vijaya* describes how when Madhva reached Gañjāma, on the banks of the river Godāvarī, hed met two prominent scholars, who were well-versed in all the important scriptures: Śobhana Bhaṭṭa and Swāmī Sāstrī. After converting them to his school, these scholars became renowned as important followers of Śrīpad Madhva. They became famous as Padmanābha Tīrtha and Narahari Tīrtha and are regarded as the principle *ācāryas* of the Madhva school after Madhva himself. Narahari Tīrtha is famous for his commentaries on Madhva's *Gīta-bhāṣya* and *Karma-nirṇaya*. He was the Prime Minister of Kaliṅga between 1271 and 1293. Padmanābha Tīrtha wrote commentaries on many of Madhva's works, including Madhva's *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, his *Anuvyākhyāna*, and his *Daśa-prakaraṇas*. He was the first commentator on many of the major works of Madhvācārya.

After converting Śobhana Bhaṭṭa and Swāmī Śāstrī, Śrīpad Madhvācārya journeyed through Andhrapradeśa, Mahārāṣṭra and Karnataka arrived at last in Uḍipi. Upon his return to Uḍipi from North India, Madhva confronted Acyutaprekṣa, who had refused to accept his ideas previously. Now the roles were reversed; *guru* became disciple and disciple became *guru*. Madhva converted Acyutaprekṣa from Śaṅkara's Vedānta to the cause of Vaiṣṇavism and accepted him as a follower.

As a result of Madhva's success in defeating opposing scholars and *gurus*, his reputation spread, and enthusiasm grew for his new system of Vedānta philosophy. As his commentaries on *Bhagavad-gīta* and Vedānta gained wider and wider acceptance, followers and new converts began to join his camp from all over India, attracted by his charismatic personality, invincible logic and scriptural knowledge, and his inspired faith.

While he stayed in Uḍipi, it was Madhva's regular habit to bathe in the ocean. One day, he was sitting on the beach absorbed in contemplation upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa. At that time, he spotted a ship, bound for Dvāraka, that was about to founder on a sand bar. He signaled the ship to safety, and it was able to safely approach the shore. The captain of the ship wanted to bestow some present upon Śrī Madhvācārya, and he accepted a large chunk of *gopī-candana tilaka*. As it was being presented to the *ācārya*, the large chunk of

tilak broke in half, revealing a huge deity of Kṛṣṇa. Everyone was astonished to find a Kṛṣṇa deity within the block of *tilak*, but Madhvācārya was not unaccustomed to miracles and accepted it as the Lord's grace. At that time he composed some beautiful prayers glorifying Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and soon after that the Deity was installed at the temple in Uḍipi where it remains today. The Deity weighed so much that even thirty men had difficulty moving it. Madhva, however, was superhumanly powerful—it is said that he was an incarnation of Vayu—and managed to personally carry the Deity to Uḍipi.

After installing the Deity of Kṛṣṇa in Uḍipi, he revised the system of Deity worship, establishing a strict regimen of ceremonial ritual and proper conduct among his followers, imposing among other things the rigorous observance of fasting on Ekādaśīs.

Having achieved such great success at home, it was time for Madhva to once more travel afar. He began a second pilgrimage to North India, where he once again visited Badarikāśrama. The *Madhva-vijaya*, written by the son of one of Madhva's disciples describes how Madhva used his sharp wits, his knowledge of many languages such as Turkish and Persian, and his courage to overcome great obstacles in his preaching. While on his North Indian tour, Madhva and his disciples arrived at a place in the province of Gaṅga Pradesh where political tensions between Hindus and Muslims prevented them from crossing the river. The Hindus were on one side of the river and the Muslims on the other side. No one dared cross, and no boat was available. Madhva and his followers, without regard for the Muslim soldiers who guarded the crossing, swam across the river. The entire camp was placed under arrest. Madhva himself was taken before the Muslim King, Sultan Jalal-uddin-Khilji, who demanded an explanation. When Madhva was finally allowed to speak on his own behalf, he spoke in Persian, addressing the king at length on devotional theism. Seeing the intensity and saintly purity of Śrīpad Madhvācārya, the Sultan's heart was softened. So impressed was he with Madhva that he wanted to offer him land and money, but Madhva set the example of renunciation by humbly declining the Sultan's offer.

Where wit would not help, Madhva would sometimes use his superhuman strength to save a situation. Once his traveling companion and *sannyāsī* disciple Satya Tīrtha was attacked by a fierce Bengal tiger. Fearless, Madhva went to the rescue. After wrestling the tiger away from Satya Tīrtha, he sent it away with its tail between its legs. Another time, while walking on pilgrimage through a dangerous part of India, he was attacked by murderous dacoits, but he easily held them off.

Madhva was a multi-faceted personality who lived a long and healthy life. He was a natural leader who believed in physical culture as well as intellectual, moral, and spiritual culture. He took part in many athletic activities, such as wrestling, swimming, and

mountain-climbing, which served him well in the Himalayas. As he came from a family of *brahmanas* that had descended from the warrior *brahmana* and incarnation of Godhead, Paraśurāma, he was tall, strong, and robust. It was reputed that there was no limit to his bodily strenghth. The *Madhva-vijaya* records how a strongman named Kaḍañjari who was said to have the strength of thirty men once challenged Madhvācārya to a contest of strength. Madhvācārya placed the big toe of his foot firmly upon the ground and asked Kaḍañjari, the famous strongman, to see if he could lift it. Straining with all his brawn again and again, the mighty Kaḍañjari was unable to move even the big toe of Madhvācārya. According to Trivikrama Paṇḍita, Madhvācārya was endowed with all the thirty-two bodily symptoms of a great personality. He had a deep, sonorous, and melodic voice and was an expert singer. His recitation of the verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was regarded as being especially sweet.

In this way, Madhva traveled extensively throughout the whole of India. He returned to South India after having visited Badarinātha, Delhi, Kurukṣetra, Benares, and Goa. After this, his travels were mostly limited to those provinces of South India near Uḍipi. After Śaṅkarācārya, who had also traveled extensively, He was the second important Vedānta *ācārya* to travel throughout India, and his broad preaching campaign had a lasting effect. Gradually, his following grew, as great personalities from all parts of India accepted him as *guru*. The *Madhva-vijaya* mentions that he had disciples from many lands, and his present day followers still include the speakers of eight different languages—Tulu, Kannada, Konkani, Maratha, Telugu, Southern Saurastri, Bengali, and Hindi.

After returning to Uḍipi, Madhva once again immersed himself in prolific literary activity. He wrote commentaries on the ten major *Upaniṣads*. He wrote ten major philosophical treatises, the *Daśa-Prakaraṇas*, as well as what many consider his most important work, the *Anu-Vyākhyāna*. He wrote a summary of Mahābharata called the *Mokṣa-dharma*, and he also commented on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Madhvācārya's dedication to the Lord and his deep scholarship made him a feared and hated enemy of the followers of Śaṅkarācārya, who had a vested interest in maintaining their position as the only bona fide Vedantists. It has been said, "Of all the plagues with which mankind is cursed, ecclesiastical tyrrany's the worst." The tyrrany of the *ācāryas* of the Śṛṅgeri-matha founded by Śaṅkarācārya led them to attack Śrīpad Madhva with every means at their disposal. They employed various means to harass the followers of Madhva. They tried to prove that Madhva did not come from any authorized disciplic succession. Finally they challenged Madhva to a debate.

The Śaṅkarites chose as their champion *paṇḍita* a highly learned scholar named Puṇḍarīka Purī, who was famed for his erudition and expertise in argument. In the debate

with Madhva he was humiliated. In arguing with Madhva Puṇḍarīka was like a schoolboy facing a professor. Aching for vengeance, the defeated *paṇḍita* arranged for one of his cohorts, a *sannyasī* named Padma Tīrtha, to steal a priceless collection of ancient Sanskrit scriptures from the library of Śrīpad Madhvācārya. The books were later recovered with the help of King Jayasiṁha of Kumla.

After Jayasiṁha Rāja recovered the books of Madhvācārya, an audience was arranged between the Jayasiṁha and Madhva. Their meeting was to be followed by a debate between the king's own court *paṇḍita* and Madhva. The *paṇḍita*, Trivikrama Paṇḍita, a resident of Viṣṇumaṅgala, was the foremost authority on impersonal Vedānta in the land of Kumla and an expert poet. They met in the temple of Kūḍil. At the end of the day's discourse, Trivikrama Paṇḍita had failed to defeat Madhva, but he refused to surrender. The debate was continued on the following day. The next day, Trivikrama Paṇḍita used all his learning, his wit, and his power of argument in an attempt to embarrass Madhva, but after exhausting himself was again unable to defeat him. This went on for fifteen days, when Trivikrama Paṇḍita, his intellect spent, his doubts destroyed, recognized Śrī Madhva as his *guru*. He surrendered to the lotus feet of Śrīpad Madhvācārya and was accepted by him as a disciple. Madhva ordered him to write a commentary on Vedānta. Trivikrama Paṇḍita's commentary is called the *Tattva-pradīpa*. His conversion was a turning point in Madhva's preaching mission. After his conversion, Trivikrama Paṇḍita's own brother and seven other important scholars took *sannyāsa* from Madhva and became the first directors of the eight Madvhaite monasteries in Uḍipi. Trivikrama Paṇḍita's son, Nārāyaṇācārya who later wrote the *Madhva-vijaya*.

In the final years of Madhva's life, he wrote further commentaries on the scriptures, including the *Nyāya-vivaraṇa*, the *Karma-nirṇaya*, the *Kṛṣṇāmṛta-Mahārṇava*, and others. By this time, Madhvācārya was growing old. He had completed what he set out to do. He had preached his message far and wide, elaborated his philosophical system in numerous commentaries, and had many trained missionaries who could carry on his work with great energy. He had written original works of such a profound character that they would continue to influence devotional theism well into the 20th century. He had established the worship of Kṛṣṇa in Uḍipi and had given *sannyāsa* to expert scholars and veteran preachers such as Padmanābha Tīrtha, Narahari Tīrtha, Mādhava Tīrtha, and Akṣobhya Tīrtha, who would succeed him in promoting the philosophical ideals of pure dualistic theism. As he finished his commentary on the *Aitereya Upaniṣad*, on the verge of his eightieth birthday, Śrīpad Madhvācārya passed away from this world and entered the eternal Vaikuṇṭha planets on the ninth day of the full moon in the month of Māgh (corresponding to January-February) in the year 1317.

The essential principles of Śrī Madhvācārya's teachings—where they run parallel to the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—have been summarized in ten points by Baladeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa in his Prameya-Ratnāvalī. These ten points are as follows:

shri madvhah praha vishnum paratamam akhilamnaya vedyam ca cisvaṁ
satyam bhedam ca jivam hari carana jusas tartamyam ca tesham
moksham vishnv-anghri-labham tad-amala-bhajanam tasya hetum pramanam
pratyaksadi trayam cety upadisati hari krsna-caitanya chandra

"Shri Madhvacaharya taught that:

1) Krishna, who is known as Hari is the Supreme Lord, the Absolute.
2) That Supreme Lord may be known through the Vedas.
3) The material world is real.
4) The jivas, or souls, are different from the Supreme Lord.
5) The jivas are by nature servants of the Supreme Lord.
6) There are two categories of jivas: liberated and illusioned.
7) Liberation means attaining the lotus feet of Krishna, that is, entering into an eternal relationship of service to the Supreme Lord.
8) Pure devotional service is the cause of this relationship.
9) The truth may be known through direct perception, inference, and Vedic authority.

These very principles were taught by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

In his *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* commentary (CC *Madhya* 9.245), Śrīpad Bhakdivedānta Swāmī comments: "For further information about Madhvācārya, one should read *Madhva-vijaya* by Nārāyaṇa Acārya."